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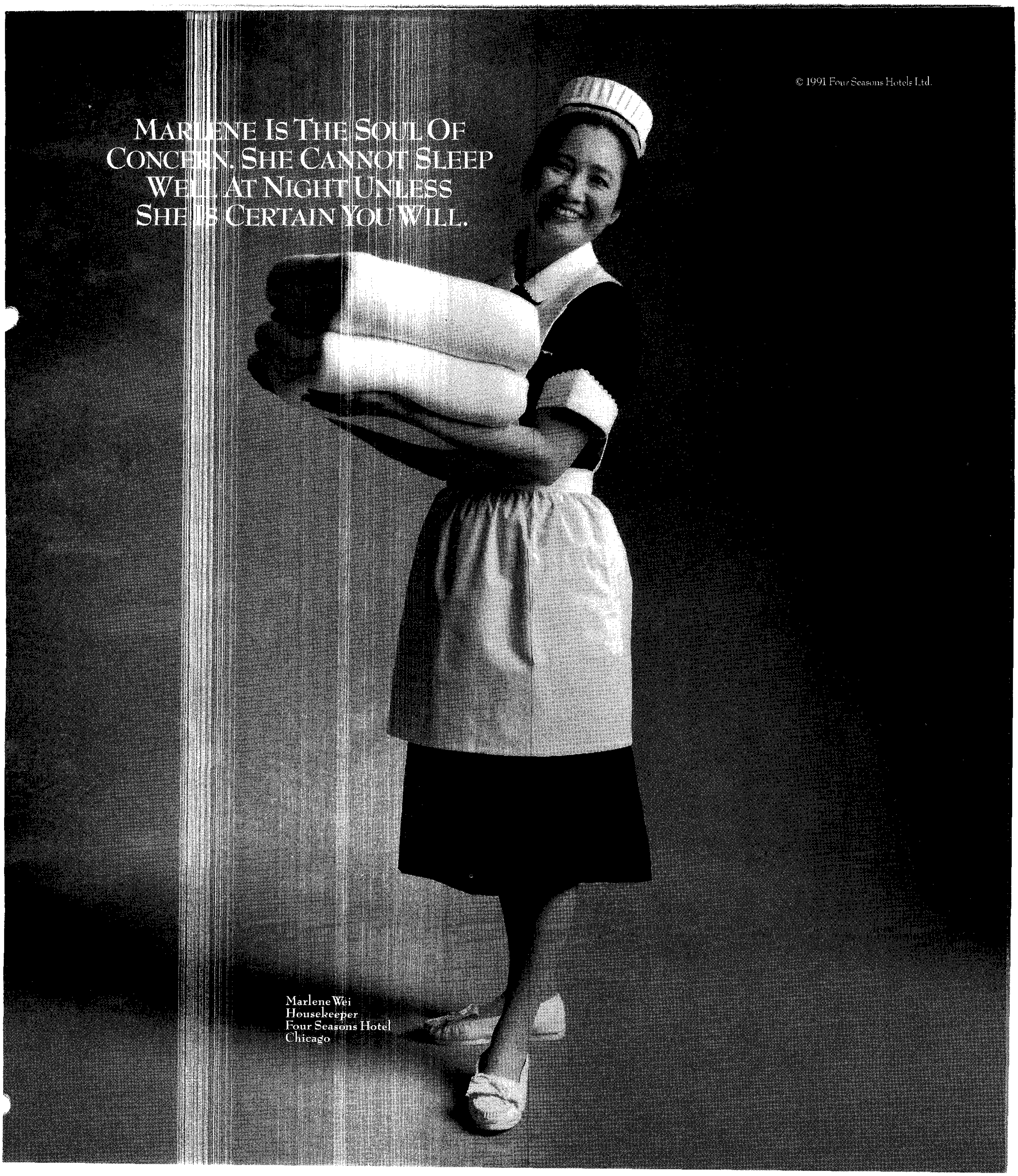
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE THEATRE

CONSIDER the translator. Long shunted to the margins of literary life, he or she has experienced a jump in status lately, at least in the performing arts. Opera houses—except for a holdout or two—employ these practical linguists to provide supertitles, and organizers of foreign theatrical productions feed translations through headsets on a regular basis. For smaller groups, such up-to-date technology has been economically out of reach. Until now, that is. In what is probably a first for a local, non-English-based theatre ensemble, the Repertorio Español—whose productions of classic and contemporary plays have consistently earned high praise—has begun using a simultaneous-translation system based on infrared technology. We attended the inauguration of the system at the Repertorio's home base, the Gramercy Arts Theatre (138 East 27th Street), one night earlier this month.

Before taking our seat, we picked up a headset and headed for an enclosed room on the theatre's third floor, where the two actors who would be reading the translations were camped in front of microphones. One of them, Josie Chavez, told us that she had done this sort of thing before, at the Public Theatre's Festival Latino, but whereas there she had watched the performance live, here she and her colleague, José Santini, would be relying on a video monitor for cues. The two wouldn't try to match the performers word for word, she said (that would be distracting), but would concentrate on the drama's high points. We wished the pair good luck and went down to our seat for a performance of "El Alcalde de Zalamea," by the Golden Age Spanish playwright Pedro Calderón de la Barca. The curtain went up, and actors strode onstage, but our headset was silent. A neighbor similarly bereft of sound dashed back to the lobby, and in a moment returned with a remedy for both of us: batteries. The rest of the performance went smoothly, and when we mentioned the glitch later to René Buch, the Repertorio's artistic director, he shook his head and replied, "You know what the Italians say—'*Traduttore: traditore.*' " Meaning: it won't happen next time (this Thursday at noon).

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

And the World Goes 'Round: The Songs of Kander and Ebb—A new musical revue, featuring Bob Cuccioli, Karen Mason, Brenda Pressley, Jim Walton, and Karen Ziemba. Previews through March 17. Opens March 18 at 6:30. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 246-0102.)

The Kingfish—A play about Huey Long, written by Larry L. King and Ben Z. Grant. With John McConnell in the title role. Previews begin March 15. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

Negro Ensemble Company—The troupe's twenty-fourth season opens with **THE LITTLE TOMMY PARKER CELEBRATED COLORED MINSTREL SHOW,** a new play by Carlyle Brown. Previews through March 16. Opens March 17 at 7. (Master Theatre, 310 Riverside Dr., at 103rd St. 663-8170.)

Pygmalion—Anthony Heald is Professor Henry Higgins, Madeleine Potter is Eliza Doolittle, and Earle Hyman is Colonel Pickering in this production of Shaw's comedy. Directed by Paul Weidner. In previews. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883.)

The Substance of Fire—A play by Jon Robin Baitz, with Patrick Breen, Sarah Jessica Parker, Ron Rifkin, Jon Tenney, and Maria Tucci. Previews through March 16. Opens March 17 at 7. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

NEW THIS SEASON

Absent Friends—Alan Ayckbourn's almost continuously funny comedy, with melancholy undertones, about three English couples who give a tea for an old friend whose fiancée has recently drowned. As the action proceeds, we come to realize that he is in better shape, emotionally speaking, than anyone present. The performance, under Lynne Meadow's direction, is all any playwright could wish for. Peter Frechette is the bereaved; Brenda Blethyn is the hostess; and Ellen Parker, Gillian Anderson, David Purdham, and John Curless are among the consolers. The distinguished setting and costumes are by John Lee Beatty and Jane Greenwood. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/25/91.) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Closes March 24.)

The Big Love—Tracey Ullman stars in a comedy by Brooke Allen and Jay Presson Allen. It is based on Florence Aadland and Tedd Thomey's 1961 book about an affair that Aadland's teen-age daughter had with Errol Flynn. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

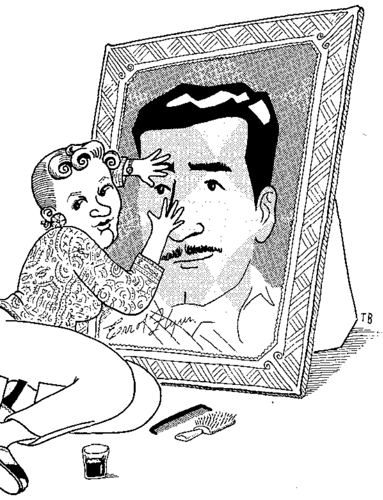
Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story—Anyone who thinks that rock and roll lives on had better steer clear of this ersatz docu-musical about the life of Buddy Holly. (11/19/90) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Candida—Laurie Kennedy has the title role in this production of Shaw's play. Presented by the Riverside Shakespeare Company. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

Carreño—A show based on the life of Teresa Carreño, the Venezuelan composer, pianist, conductor, and singer. Written and performed by Pamela Ross and directed by Gene Frankel. Most performances are in English; a few are in Spanish. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Circle Repertory Company—Jon Polito and Peter Riegert star in **ROAD TO NIRVANA,** a satire by Arthur Kopit. (Reviewed in this issue.) (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100. Closes March 24.)

Daugherty & Field Off-Broadway—The cabaret team of Bill Daugherty and Robin Field in a revue of swing and show tunes. (Double Image, 15 Vandam St. 924-1120.)



Tracey Ullman in "The Big Love"

Fiddler on the Roof—The Israeli actor Topol makes a commanding Tevye—the best of all of them—in this production, which falls somewhere between revival and facsimile. The songs are by Bock and Harnick; the dances and direction are re-created from the Jerome Robbins originals; and the costumes are from the Patricia Zipprodt originals. (12/3/90) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510.)

A Fierce Attachment—Tovah Feldshuh in a one-woman play written by Edward M. Cohen and based on Vivian Gornick's memoir of the same name. (Jewish Repertory Theatre, 344 E. 14th St. 505-2667. Closes March 24.)

The Haunted Host—Harvey Fierstein and Jason Workman in a revival of Robert Patrick's 1964 comedy. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Closes March 17.)

Henry IV, Parts I and II—The sixteenth and seventeenth plays in the Public's Shakespeare Marathon, both directed by JoAnne Akalaitis. With Thomas Gibson, Louis Sorich, René Rivera, Lisa Gay Hamilton, Traber Burns, and Mark Deakins, among others. (3/11/91) (Public, 425 Lafayette St.) 598-7150.)

I Can Get It for You Wholesale—A revival of the 1962 Jerome Weidman–Harold Rome musical, presented by the American Jewish Theatre. (Susan Bloch, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes March 24.)

Jackie Mason: Brand New—The comedian brings his one-man show to Broadway again. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—Presenting three plays in rotating repertory: Ibsen's **WHEN WE DEAD AWAKEN** (through March 29) and a double bill of Georg Büchner's **WOYZECK** and **LEONCE AND LENA,** which were adapted by Eric Bentley. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

The Learned Ladies—The Molière work, in a new translation by Freyda Thomas. With Jean Stapleton. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

Life During Wartime—A dark comedy by Keith Reddin. The cast includes Leslie Lyles, Bruce Norris, W. H. Macy, and Welker White. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Closes March 17.)

Lost in Yonkers—Neil Simon's new play, with Irene Worth, Mercedes Ruehl, Kevin Spacey, Jamie Marsh, Danny Gerard, and Mark Blum. Directed by Gene Saks. (3/11/91) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

Mambo Mouth—John Leguizamo's one-man show, in which he portrays seven Hispanic characters. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

Mule Bone—This play with music, a collaboration between Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes, was written in 1930, during the Harlem Renaissance, but was never produced, because the authors quarrelled. The setting is a small Florida town with an exclusively black population. The first act, brimming with episodes (and humor and characters), is just this side of chaos, but the second act tells a clear story about the trial of a young man who knocks out his best friend with a mule bone. Under the strong direction of Michael Schultz, every moment is lively. The members of the company represent the cream of black theatre over the past twenty years or so. Taj Mahal was both composer and arranger. (2/25/91) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Occasional Grace—A "site-specific" production, presented in several locations, by the En Garde Arts company. Written by Michael Ahn, Neena Beber, Magdalia Cruz, and Talvin Wilks, with music by Amina Claudine Myers. (Universalist Church, 160 Central Park W., at 78th St. March 13-16. . . . ¶ St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 308 W. 46th St. March 20-23. For information about tickets for all performances, call 274-8123.)

Once on This Island—A musical by Lynn Ahrens (book and lyrics) and Stephen Flaherty (score), which is based on Rosa Guy's 1985 novel, "My Love, My Love." (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Pearl Theatre Company—Presenting a double bill of one-acts by Arthur Schnitzler: **COUNTESS MITZI** and **THE FAREWELL SUPPER.** (125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708. Closes March 23.)

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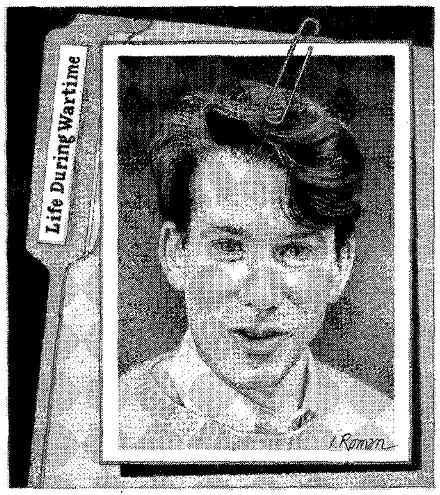
Remembrance—A play by Graham Reid, with Aideen O'Kelly. (Irish Arts Theatre, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318.)

A Room of One's Own—Patrick Garland's adaptation of the Virginia Woolf classic, starring Eileen Atkins. The show is imported from London; Mr. Garland directed. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

Shadowlands—William Nicholson's vulgar stage adaptation of the beautiful television film about C. S. Lewis that he wrote for the BBC is essentially a tourist trap. It Broadwayizes everything that in the movie was subtle or sincere. Directed by Elijah Moshinsky; with Nigel Hawthorne and Jane Alexander. (11/26/90) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099.)



Keith Reddin, author of "Life During Wartime"

The Speed of Darkness—Steve Tesich's play—about a Vietnam veteran named Joe, his family, his war buddy, and his guilty secret—is unsatisfactory, despite the presence of Len Cariou, Stephen Lang, and Lisa Eichhorn, among other good actors. (3/11/91) (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Sum of Us—David Stevens' poignant comedy about how hard it is for parents and children to break free of each other (particularly if they get on too well) is set in present-day Australia. Depending on how you look at it, the play is either very dear and rather flawed or rather dear and very flawed, but cast and direction are both excellent. (11/5/90) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

Taking Steps—This very funny farce by the inspired English playwright Alan Ayckbourn is a technical as well as a dramatic triumph. The action, which takes place in a three-story suburban house, is played on a one-level set; the actors mime climbing up and down steps indicated on a path surrounding the set. The plot deals with a marriage that is coming apart, to the surprise and shock of the husband. The performances, unfortunately, do not match the precision of the play (except for those of Christopher Benjamin, as the husband, and Spike McClure, as a young solicitor). But no ineptitude can dim the brilliance of this comedy. (3/4/91) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

CATS: Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **CITY OF ANGELS:** Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run will celebrate its thirty-first birthday in May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1991:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.) . . . **GRAND HOTEL:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **PRELUDE TO A KISS:** Craig Lucas's entertaining romantic comedy slips into fantasy when an old man kisses a bride at her wedding. With Steve Guttenberg, starting March 19. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.) . . . **SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION:** You're best off knowing nothing about the new John Guare play other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright, director Jerry Zaks, and actress Stockard Channing. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.) . . . **SMOKE ON THE MOUNTAIN:** This loving satire of old-time gospel music, set in 1938, is perfectly delightful. Written by Connie Ray, it re-creates a Saturday-night service at a small church in rural North Carolina, where a family of gospel singers have been invited to appear. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

DANCE

THERE is now on the market an audio system that permits the listener to take a recording of, say, Michael Tilson Thomas conducting "The Nutcracker" and to manipulate it through computer programming so as to hear the performance as if one were seated in Royal Festival Hall, or at a band shell, or in a packed football stadium. We hadn't realized that we needed to hear "The Nutcracker" in a football stadium, but we are always glad to learn about our pesky unsuspected desires, and so we were fascinated by a recent panel discussion called "Live Performance in a Technological Age," at the Bruno Walter Auditorium in the public library at Lincoln Center. The participants included Allan Miller, a film director and producer; John Goberman, the executive producer of Lincoln Center's "Live from Lincoln Center" series; and Alison Ames, a vice-president of Deutsche Grammophon. Most of the talk was concerned with the electronic transmission of the performing arts. Although the evening's remarks would surely be enhanced by the experience of hearing them as if you were sitting on the back of a burro at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, we bring you an excerpt on the bare page. The speaker was Mr. Goberman.

"Broadway is entirely amplified at this point. On a practical level, the effect is that you don't really need orchestras anymore. There was a demonstration before a union negotiation with musicians where the Shuberts or whoever showed that the entire score of 'Cats' could be performed on two synthesizers. It's not just that somebody can play a keyboard but that audiences are *used* to amplified sound.

"As far as television goes, obviously everything is picked up over microphones. I hate the idea that the audience is *listening* over microphones. Once you start there, then you don't need big voices, then opera's dead, and we might just [as well] go into a nuclear holocaust."

The panel was part of a series, produced by Lincoln Center, entitled "Speaking Out: The Performing Arts Forum 1991." The next program, on March 14, will be "Choreography in the 90s: Influences, Innovations and Uncertainties."

Joffrey Ballet—Final performances. March 12 at 8: "Romeo and Juliet." . . . ¶ March 13 at 8: "Empyrean Dances," "Lila," "Tarantella," and "Suite Saint-Saëns." . . . ¶ March 14 at 8: "Postcards," "Lila," "L'Air d'Esprit," and "Trinity." . . . ¶ March 15 at 8: "Les Noces," "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune," and "Le Sacre du Printemps." . . . ¶ March 16 at 2: "Postcards," "Round of Angels," "L'Air d'Esprit," and "Trinity." . . . ¶ March 16 at 8: "Empyrean Dances," "Runaway Train," "Panoramagram," and "The Green Table." . . . ¶ March 17 at 2: "Empyrean Dances," "Runaway Train," "Panoramagram," and "Suite Saint-Saëns." . . . ¶ March 17 at 7:30: "Postcards," "Round of Angels," "L'Air d'Espirt," and "Trinity." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Merce Cunningham Dance Company—A two-week engagement. March 12 at 7:30: "Cargo X," "Exchange," and "Pictures." . . . ¶ March 13 at 8: "August Pace," "Neighbors" (première), and "Fabrications." . . . ¶ March 14 at 8: "Field and Figures," "Quartet," and "Inventions." . . . ¶ March 15 at 8: "Polarity," "August Pace," and "Fabrications." . . . ¶ March 16 at 2: "Polarity," "Neighbors," and "Inventions." . . . ¶ March 16 at 8: "Field and Figures," "Quartet," and "Inventions." . . . ¶ March 17 at 3: "Inventions," "Neighbors," and "Exchange." . . . ¶ March 19 at 8: "Polarity," "Trackers" (première), and "Cargo X." . . . ¶ March 20 at 8: "Points in Space," "August Pace," and "Trackers." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Through March 24.)

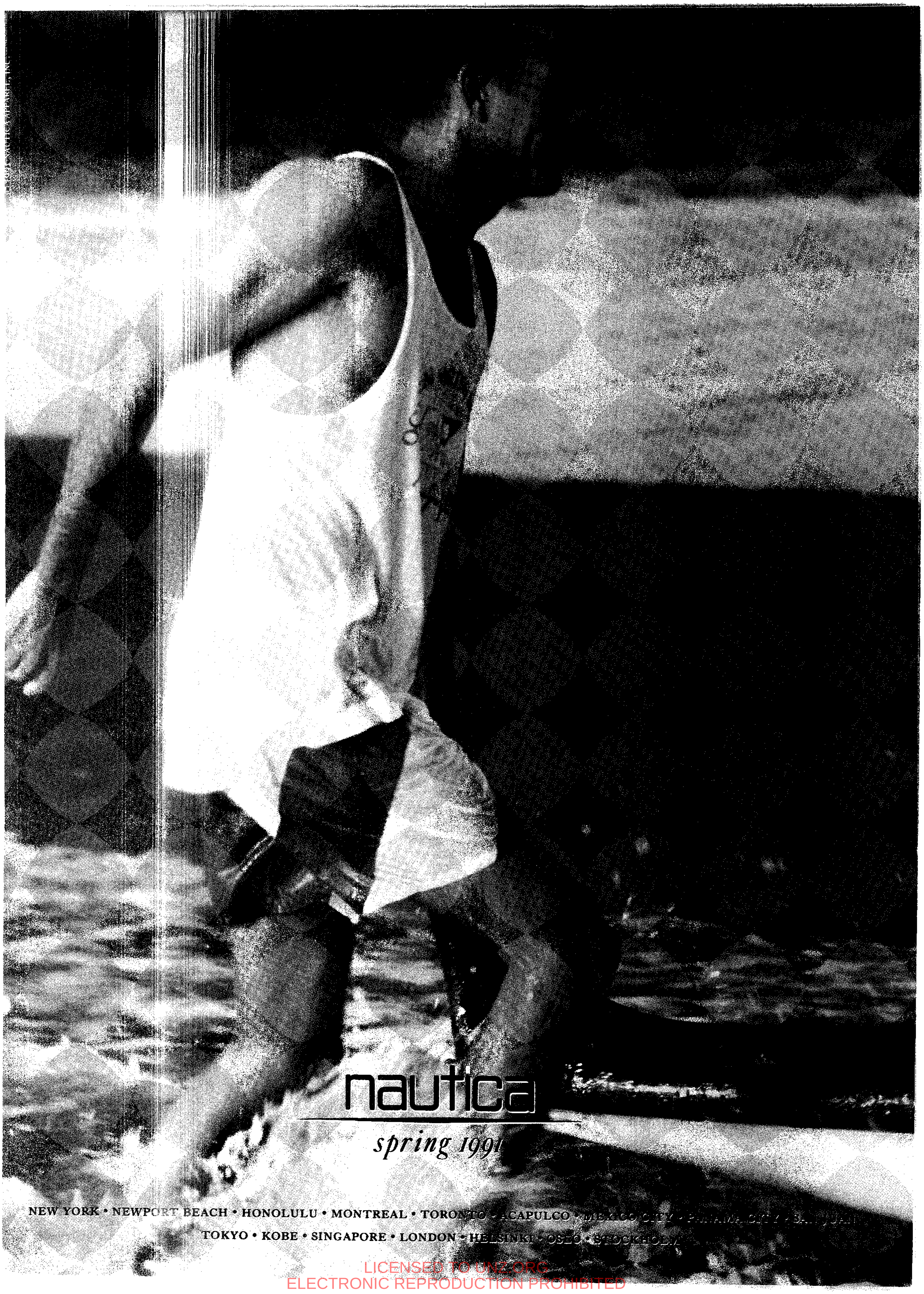
Margaret Jenkins Dance Company—In the New York premières of "Age of Unrest" and "Woman Window Square." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. March 12-16 at 8 and March 17 at 2.) . . . **NOTE:** A talk by Ms. Jenkins will follow the performance on March 15.

Dances Patrelle—In a program of new works, with guest dancer Cynthia Gregory, among others. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. March 14-16 at 8.)

Emily Schottland—With her company in "What Should We Name the Baby?," a program of new and repertory works. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. March 14-16 at 8 and March 17 at 3.)

Diane Jacobowitz Dance Theatre—Presenting the première of "Operation Dance," an evening-length work. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie. Second Ave. at 10th St. March 14-16 at 8 and March 17 at 7. For reservations, call 1-718 622-1810.)

Music and Dance of Sumatra—Three troupes of dancers and musicians from the Aceh and Minangkabau regions of Sumatra. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. March 19-20 at 8. Through March 24.)



NAUTICA APPAREL, INC.

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spring 1991

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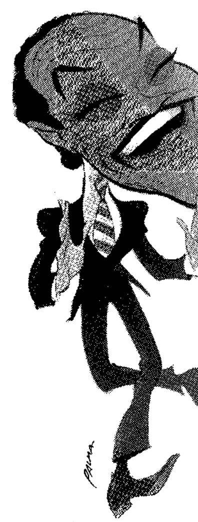
NIGHT LIFE

THE mix-and-match style sometimes called "downtown" has by now become commonplace and has even spawned its own pet terms—"genre-bending," "hybrid," "avant-jazz," etc. At the Knitting Factory, the style's command center, almost any night of the week you can find groups that, adhering to the post-modern ethos, raid freely, sometimes anarchically, from the past. The Lounge Lizards are one of the most established and ancient of the downtown groups—they've been around for all of ten years—and, as if to acknowledge their hegemony, the club recently booked them for a week straight.

The band's current lineup—there have been several restructurings—proves yet again that John Lurie, the saxophonist, composer, and chief Lizard, is a deft personnel manager. He recently told the *Times* that "this band came from . . . vamping the Knitting Factory scene." At the performance we attended there, Lurie showed off his new recruits by giving them extended, stage-clearing solo time. The band's foremost strength, however, is ensemble playing. They like to go deep into a funk groove and stay there. With a drummer, a percussionist, and a vibist who doubles on timpani and marimba, the Lizards pull off some explosive and athletic rhythmic feats; in several numbers, the bass held down a simple, repeating figure while these three went at it, lurching, blasting, circling each other and the beat. There are many other elements to Lurie's compositions, including Arabic passages (mainly stated by the group's cellist) and a good deal of groping, minimalistic exposition—sighing and squawking horns; timpani rolls with weird up-and-down tunings; fierce, angular electric-guitar lines. The group maintains a nice balance between order and chaos: a melody is established, torn to shreds, and then sewn back together. And Lurie, who keeps up a funny, deadpan patter between compositions, is too much of an entertainer to ever let the band get ponderous.



Harold Nicholas at Fortune Garden Pavilion

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Singer **SALLY ANN HOWES**, whose considerable list of stage and screen credits includes a role in "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang," is currently making her cabaret début in the Oak Room. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—It's everything a cabaret should be: sleek, elegant, intimate, and slightly decadent. It also offers something that other cabarets do not: tapas, which come from the Spanish restaurant adjoining the club. One has never known how seriously to take the wonderfully campy, over-the-top **PHOEBE LÉGÈRE**, who's performing here through March 17. On the one hand, there's the fact that she's a trained pianist, cellist, and accordionist, the fact that she has a four-octave vocal range, and the fact that she has written an opera. On the other hand, there's the fact that she appeared in "The Toxic Avenger II," the fact that she is double-jointed and can play piano with one leg hitched up behind her head, and the fact that her opera is about a three-hundred-and-fifty-pound cleaning woman who becomes President. **LA GRAN SCENA OPERA COMPANY** starts up on March 19.

BIRDLAND, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—Many musicians who visit this jazz house are honored—if that's the word—by having their portraits done, "in concert," by the house artist. These impressionistic renderings round out a glossy décor that includes flying-saucer light fixtures, burgundy velvet drapes, and some neon wading birds. Alto saxophonist and composer **BOBBY WATSON** will be on hand March 15-16, with his group, Horizon, featuring **VICTOR LEWIS**. The **JAY LEONHART** trio begins a four-nighter on March 18. Music from nine. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—This blue-on-blue club is an institution and it knows it: how many other clubs sell their own belt buckles? **ANGELA BOFILL**, a Bronx-born singer-songwriter who roams from pop to cabaret to Latin, is here March 12-17. R. & B. diva **RUTH BROWN** begins work on March 19. Music from nine. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. **DAVE MASON** performs on March 13; **KENNY RANKIN** claims March 16; and **KRIS KRISTOFFERSON** headlines March 18-19. Shows at eight and eleven. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar where, if your neighbors coöperate, you can hear the beautiful, singular sound of musicians thinking. A trio consisting of **GARY BARTZ**, **GEORGE CABLES**, and **CHRISTIAN MC BRIDE** is at work through March 16. The **RALPH MOORE** quartet begins a week-long engagement March 18. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

CAFÉ SIN-É, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—An unpretentious storefront café devoted to such things as Irish stew and the *Irish Times*. There's no stage per se, but bohemian musicians gather around a piano and work up some wistful sets while bohemian patrons sit writing in journals, rolling cigarettes, or lingering over one of the two varieties of beer sold here: Budweiser and Rolling Rock. Sin-é means "that's it" in Gaelic and is *not* Sinéad O'Connor's nickname. The café is a nice place to while away an hour, and you never know who'll turn up and tune up. Music begins at about eight-thirty.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—Until March 16, the pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is home to the coolly elegant **KAREN AKERS**. The slinky **EARTHA KITT**, who growls and purrs on the subjects of men and money, takes over as of March 19. Music Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans' Bar, **KURT WIETING** is at work through March 16, and **RONNY WHYTE** starts up on March 19. Music from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CONDON'S, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—In the shadow of the Zeckendorf Towers sits this stucco-walled grotto, whose intimate scale makes it a fine spot for jazz. Saxophonist and flutist **FRANK WESS**, who was a longtime Count Basie associate, leads a foursome March 12-17. Pianist **AHMAD JAMAL** begins a two-week stay on March 19. Music after nine.

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE, 25 Third Ave., at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—Hipsters, posers, N.Y.U. students, the occasional skinhead—a typical East Village bar. The motif is prehistoric punk—a Stone Age mural, toy dinosaurs and pterodactyls—and on peak nights there's a "take no prisoners" atmosphere. **DEE DEE RAMONE**, the bassist for the fabled Queens punkers, leads his own outfit here on March 16. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at ten, Fridays and Saturdays at eleven.

DELTA 88, 332 Eighth Ave., at 26th St. (924-3499)—A pleasant hangout for white-collar trash, where you'll find cold Dixie beer, collard greens, and plenty of men who know how to wear a leather vest. As if that weren't enough, the bar-and-restaurant also features a corrugated-tin ceiling and a truckload of sort-of-Southern items: a photo booth, a giant Amoco sign, an Evel Knievel lunchbox. Most nights, the buffet turns into a bandstand at nine. Chicken-fried steak, deep-fried crawdads (a.k.a. Cajun popcorn), and other exotic Southern fare.

EAGLE TAVERN, 355 W. 14th St. (924-0275)—An Irish bar, way out on the western edge of town, where the great potholed boulevards turn to cobblestones, and the world across the Hudson flashes its come-hither signs. There'll be a St. Patrick's Day Extravaganza on March 16, with sets at six, eight, and eleven.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through the iffy-looking side door, down the famous fun-house tunnel that's lined with mirrors and corrugated tin, and down a short flight of stairs, you'll find this softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz preserve. **STANLEY TURRENTINE**, a blues-inflected tenor saxophonist, holds forth March 12-17. Saxophonist **FRANK MORGAN** and a quartet begin work on March 19. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL**, the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

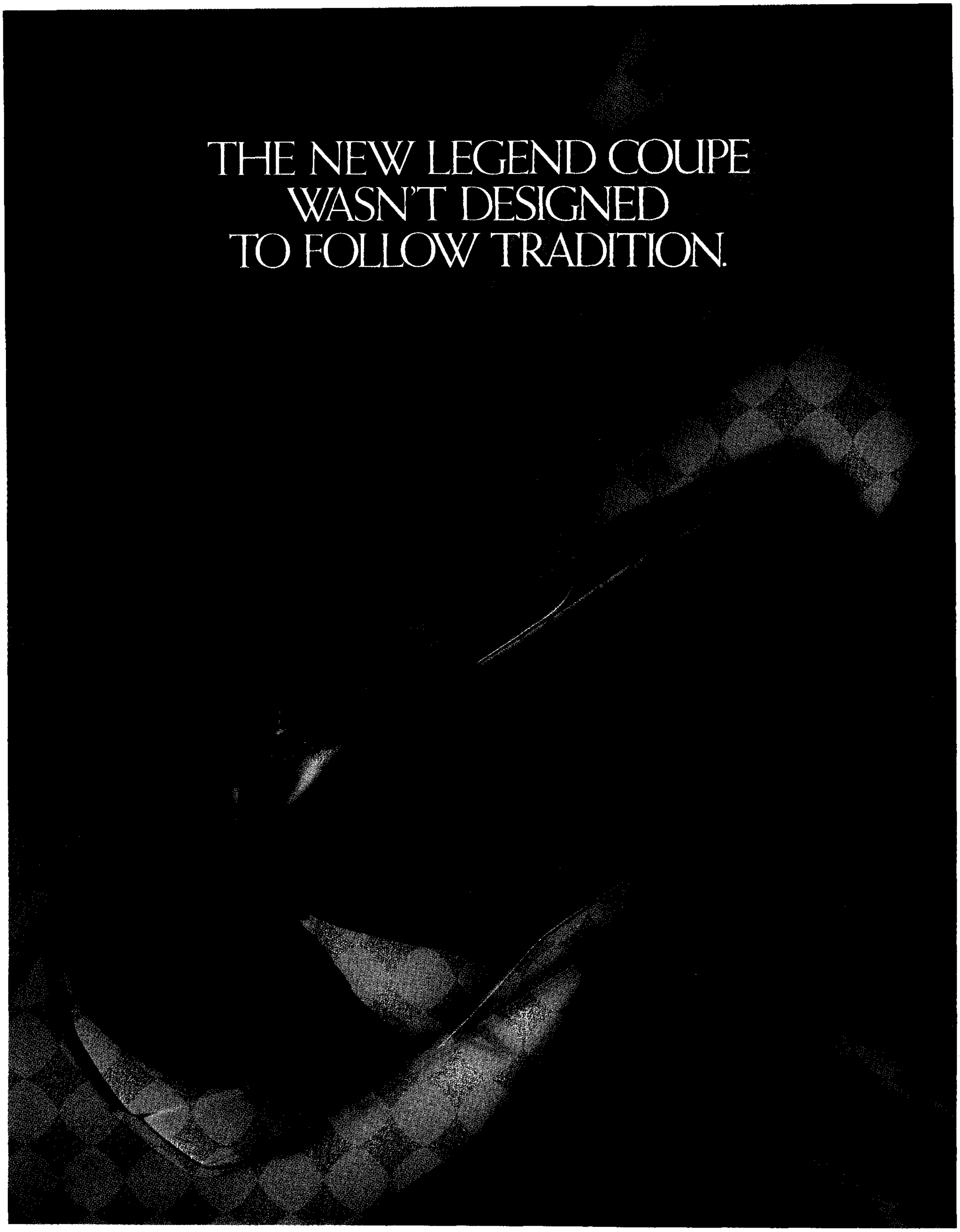
FLANNERY'S, 205 W. 14th St. (929-9589)—Formerly a dive bar called McCarthy's, this two-floor establishment looks as if it had been dynamited and rebuilt from the ashes up. On the ground floor is a well-scrubbed, amiable pub with many of the classic features—pints of Guinness, non-stop TV sports—and a few near-classic ones: a portrait of Elvis, a CD jukebox. Downstairs is a low-ceiling space that looks like a rec room; on Tuesdays and weekends it's home to an enlightened mixture of garage-rock, rockabilly, surf-punk, and psychedelic-rock bands. March 16 belongs to the **FULL-TIME MEN**, an ensemble featuring two Fleshtones and one member of Jason and the Scorchers. Music from nine on Tuesdays and eleven on Fridays and Saturdays.

FORTUNE GARDEN PAVILION, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—With jazz you get eggroll. At this posh-looking two-floor Chinese restaurant, tucked into a midtown skyscraper, you'll find a lot of business people and a lot of hanging plants. In the middle of the main dining room, you'll also find **HAROLD NICHOLAS** through March 17. Nicholas, who is one half of the famed tap-dancing team the Nicholas Brothers, is practicing his art (he also sings) on a ten-by-ten dance floor laid down especially for him. Pianist **JOANNE BRACKEEN** and bassist **CALVIN HILL** kick off on March 19. Music from six-thirty.

GREENE STREET, 101 Greene St. (925-2415)—This is such a gorgeous, thirtiesish movie set of a place that you expect gunmen to burst in at any moment. The restaurant-bar—forested and twilit—is about the size of a football field, with the piano at the fifty-yard line. If your seats are good enough, you'll hear some able entertainers, including pianist **JOANNE BRACKEEN**, who'll be here March 12-16. Music from six-thirty on weekdays and from seven on weekends.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—Situated in a neighborhood that boasts the Puck Building to the west and a host of windshield washers to the east, this modest space provides a forum for free-thinking musicians. Beat and melody are optional, "music" and "noise" relative terms. **AMBITIOUS LOVERS** performs here on March 16-17; **PLAY** (a trio consisting of **BOBBY PREVITE**, **MARTY EHRLICH**, and **ANTHONY COX**) appears on March 18; and singer-songwriter Lori Carson comes in on March 19. Music after nine.

MANNY'S CAR WASH, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—A recent addition to the little-heralded Upper East Side club scene. Don't go expecting to be sprayed with soapy water and massaged by large brushes: the fluorescent sign outside is the only car-wash reference. Inside, the place looks like an adman's idea of a blues bar. The solid and soulful R. & B. duo the **HOLMES BROTHERS**—the guitarist-singer Sherman and the bassist-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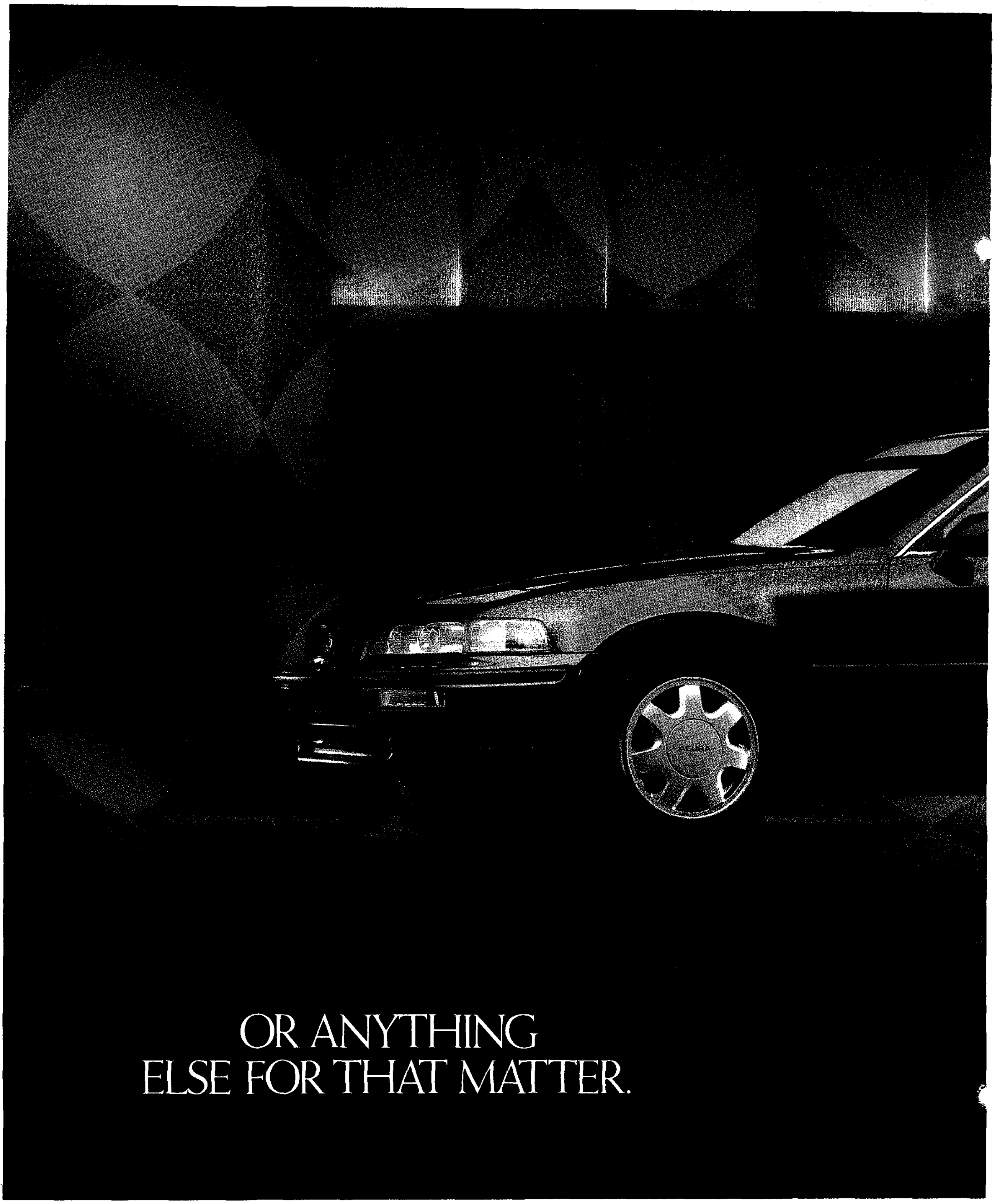

Traditionally, a new version of a successful automobile starts with the old version. Knowing how Acura engineers feel about tradition, it comes as no surprise that in building the new Legend Coupe, they started from scratch. The new, longitudinally mounted, 3.2-liter V-6 now offers 25% more power. The newly designed, four-wheel double-wishbone suspension enhances handling and road feel. And as far as the beautiful new shape is concerned, let's just say the wind

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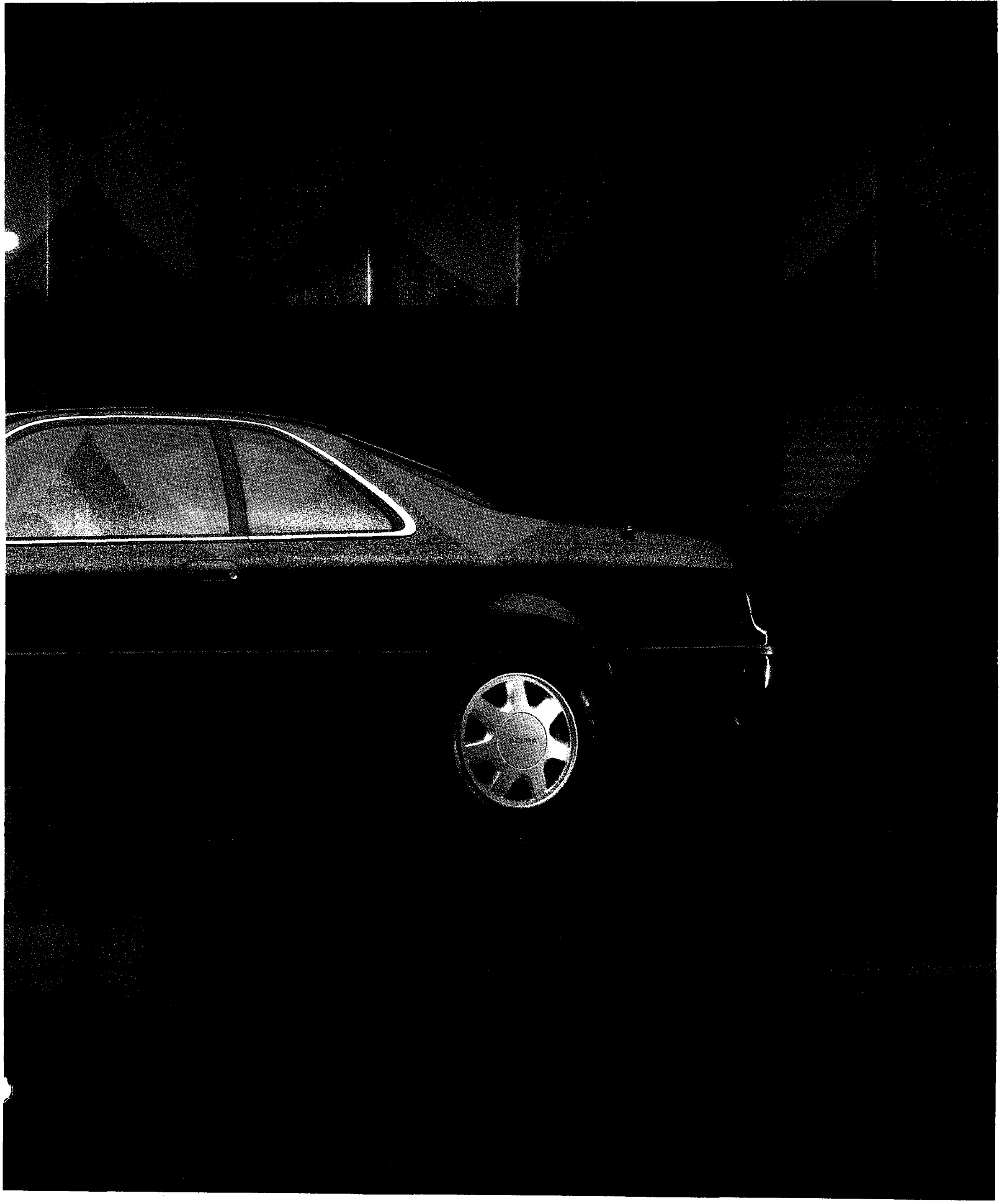

can't slow down what it can't find. A fact that you'll appreciate even more from inside the Legend Coupe's luxurious interior. From its performance seating and thoughtfully placed controls to its driver's side and available passenger's side air bags, the cabin is designed to help you focus on the only thing that will be in front of you. The open road. Call 1-800-TO-ACURA for the name of the nearest dealer.

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NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

singer Wendell—will be here, with their band, on March 14. Music from nine-fifteen.

Marquee, 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—A rock club, just off the West Side Highway, that is one of the city's main venues for college-radio fare. The Manchester import **INSPIRAL CARPETS,** who'll be here March 14, are simply a knockout, and their first full-length release, "Life," has taken up more or less permanent residence in our compact-disk player. Like their fellow psychedelia revivalists, the group works in wheeling organ solos and sixtiesish *ah-ah-AH* backing vocals. The best point of reference for Inspiral Carpets, though, is probably the Jam. Tom Hingley sings more like Paul Weller than Paul Weller does—he gets the same pissed-off warble in his voice and he retraces some of Weller's melodies—but, more important, something seems to be at stake in his band's songs. At the Marquee, Inspiral Carpets will be previewing music from a new album due out in May. **BUDDY GUY** and **KOKO TAYLOR** come in on March 16.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A popular hangout for musicians and their followers. Manhattanites who stay through the second set will need all their Scout training to get home. **BOB MOULD** has released two solo albums since the demise of his thrash outfit Hüsker Dü: "Workbook," which was surprisingly quiet and lyrical, and "Black Sheets of Rain," which was, in Mould's own words, "pretty unholy loud." Mould will give an acoustic set here March 11-12.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A mid-Manhattan pub for well-heeled gents and high-heeled ladies. **HELEN REDDY** is the current attraction. In the early seventies, it was hard to turn on a radio without hearing "Delta Dawn," "Angie Baby," "I Am Woman," or some other Reddy blockbuster. In recent years, the singer has continued to perform—in the theatre as well as the concert hall—but the place her name crops up most often is on late-night-TV ads for compilation records. Her show here is her New York cabaret début. Dining. Closed Sundays.

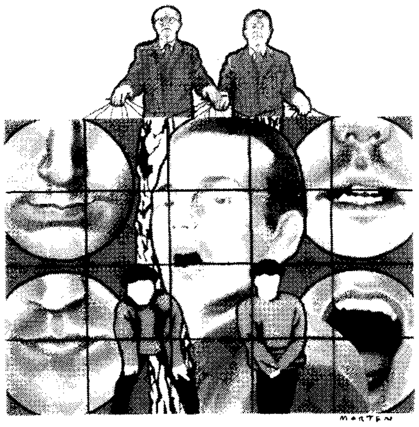
Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret where a club soda costs, well, a *lot.* **KATHIE LEE GIFFORD**—once voted the most beautiful woman on television—is here through March 16. She is being backed by a sextet. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Sticky Mike's Frog Bar—8 Great Jones St. (533-3000)—A subterranean newcomer to New York's night life. On the club's back wall one finds embarrassingly cheesy renderings of full-figured gals—the kind of artwork usually reserved for pinball machines. Otherwise, Sticky Mike's is an airy, convivial place with some comfy, diner-style booths, a fleet of IKEA-style tables and chairs, and jazz musicians on the bandstand every Friday and Saturday, beginning at ten, and on Mondays at eleven.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who roam the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. The venerable, gentle-toned flugelhorn player **ART FARMER** leads a quintet Tuesdays through Sundays. The electrified big band of the late Gil Evans, now under the direction of his son, the trumpeter Miles Evans, is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Sweetwaters, 170 Amsterdam Ave., at 67th St. (873-4100)—Pink carnations on the tables, shrimp creole on the menu, and a sunken dance floor with a "Saturday Night Fever" ball. The stage, dominated by a white grand piano, is usually given over to soul and R. & B. acts. The uninhibited and uncensored singer **MILLIE JACKSON** is performing March 14-16. Shows at nine and eleven.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. The décor is homey and a little faded, like an attic full of memorabilia. Pianist **MAL WALDRON** leads a trio March 12-17; the **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA,** formerly the Mel Lewis orchestra, begins a four-night engagement on March 18. Music after ten on Mondays, and at nine-thirty on other nights.



Inspiral Carpets at the Marquee

THE EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

Miss Kitty sure knows how to throw a party at her place. No, not *that* Miss Kitty. This Miss Kitty doesn't have red hair. It's blond. And so is her wig. True, Miss Kitty does throw the kind of parties that Matt Dillon would attend, but not *that* Matt Dillon. Kitty's place, however, is dead-bang-smack in the middle of the latter-day equivalent of Dodge City: downtown East L.A., the part that looks as if it were closer to the outskirts of Bakersfield than to the beach, the part where sunshine during the day beams down as an affront. In order to walk up the three flights of tinder to get to this space, you have to prove to two guys who could scare Hannibal Lecter that you ain't a narc or the law.

It's a couple of hours before daybreak, and the three hundred or so kids who gather beneath the suspended black-light paintings that bounce eerily in the ultraviolet or under the dolls' heads that surround a hanging dressmaker's dummy (the heads are also splayed across chairs, wrapped up in rugs, crumpled on the floor, and dangled over the fire escapes) are still rarin'. Dancing earlier at the revived Club Louis, on Washington Street, was just a teaser. The music here is even funkier (though the turntable skips about as often as Martha Wash's voice is mixed), and the latecoming crowd is much younger. There are no platforms for exhibitionists, so they work it on top of stepladders. Beer is stashed in the freight elevator. The floor is littered with bottles and stub-size invitations, strewn like confetti, beckoning everyone to other clubs. Deee-Lite-wear is preferred, with Kim Basinger-wear a close second. Anyone who thinks the new generation is too traumatized for sex should come with a pen, paper, and some Prozac for the nerves. "Isn't it the best one yet?" smiles the deliciously bubbly Miss Kitty. No one quibbles. "You go home happy now."

But we can't go home. Seems there's a major brawl going on in the street, and we're cautioned that unless we want to get hit by flying bottles and broken windshield glass we'd best shut up and dance. "Gunsmoke" redux? If only Matt Dillon were here. The original one.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus—The hundred-and-twenty-first version of the Greatest Show on Earth. (Nassau Coliseum. March 12-19. For information about show times and tickets, call 1-516 794-9300.)

Jessie Allen—Presenting a performance called "History, or Lying in My Kitchen," in which dolls, clay, and chocolate-chip cookies are used as props. (Downtown Art Co., 64 E. 4th St. 979-7362. March 14-17 at 8. Through March 24.)

"Seventeen Kilos of Garlic"—A monologue with music (a six-piece jazz band) and dance (eight dancers), by Dan Froot. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. March 14-16 at 10. Through March 23.)

P.S. 122—March 15 at 8: Uzi Parnes, Alvin Eng, Jim Browne, and others. . . . ¶ March 16 at 8: Brendan de Vallance, Rudy Burckhardt, and others. . . . ¶ March 14-17 at 9:30: Penny Arcade in "La Miseria," a performance work with a cast of thirty, about growing up in an Italian-American family. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

Benefit—Holly Hughes and Karen Finley on video; Jessica Hagedorn, Lenora Champagne, Robbie McCauley, and others in live performances. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. March 12 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the performance.)

ART

Paul Georges' allegories might be the daydreams of an old-fashioned macho painting man—a onetime Cedar Tavern sort of guy, perhaps. Most characteristically, the paintings are themselves big and brawny, and their classical protagonists are full-bodied as well, at once cartoonish and statuesque. Many of his newest works, on view at the Plumb gallery (81 Greene Street; through March 16), were inspired by the ruins of the Temple of Bassae, in Greece, which Georges found "extraordinary," and by the Bassae Room in the British Museum, where, according to the artist, the archeological friezes are hung much lower than they were meant to be and look "uninspired." Several of Georges' paintings have monochrome borders based on these Greek warrior friezes, and these embattled borders most often frame mythological episodes—an intrepid Aurora, for instance, assisted by a dove and holding a crescent moon as she steps into a yolk-yellow sky. This painting and many others, such as the artist's wonderfully dramatic "Diane and Actaeon" cycle (not on view here), the story of a man turned into a stag by the goddess he dared ogle, are lusciously painted and very unfussy.

Chief among Georges' numerous painterly virtues is his directness. But there is something terribly plaintive about these pictures of triumphant women, of tormented or escaping or transformed men, and, indeed, of ruins. The most affecting work in the exhibition is a self-portrait titled "In the Studio." In this painting the artist stands warily, powerful shoulders hunched and strong features partly shadowed, wearing a peacetime uniform of sandals, jeans, dark-blue sweater, and striped polo shirt. The thought dawns that he really *identifies* with those low-hung friezes in the Bassae Room, with those noble, picked-over ruins. Georges looks like a warrior-hero—from the sex wars and the battles of art—put out to pasture in Sagaponack.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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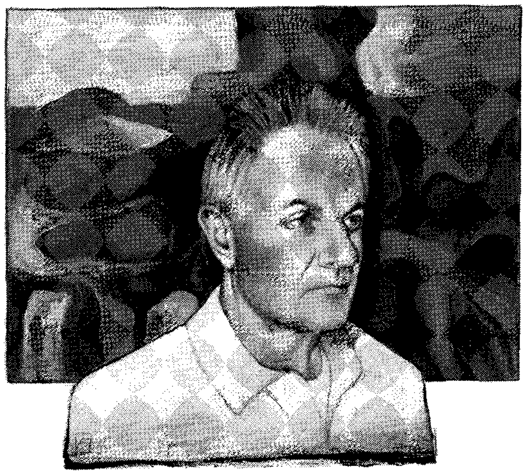
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A very atmospheric array of the classic Suprematist works of Kasimir Malevich (1878-1935), along with early, chunky Fauvist figures, and a number of intensely peculiar late paintings from the thirties. Even in the earliest paintings one can sense the pulsating, from-the-feet-up energy that, when mixed with the romance of Slavic folklore, has traditionally meant spirit in Russian art. It becomes quite clear, too, that Malevich's Suprematist works—paintings like the amazing "Black Square," "Black Cross," and "Black Circle," all from 1923, or his exquisite white-on-white compositions—are icons. Through March 24. . . . ¶ This small show of works by Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840), which occupies two modestly proportioned rooms in the Lehman wing, consists of nine paintings, most of *them* small, and eleven works on paper, all lent by the Hermitage and Pushkin Museums, in the Soviet Union. The artist himself has at least until recently been the focus of primarily specialized interest. But it is really very easy to understand Friedrich's resurgence and growing popularity. Especially in the drawings—wonderfully moody, macabre depictions of owls and coffins and windows gaping out onto . . . what?—but also in a few paintings of same-sex couples staring out into the nothingness of sea or air, viewers will find haunted, luminous images of the early-Romantic set-piece vision of modern malaise and melancholia. Through March 31. . . . ¶ "Albrecht Dürer: The Apocalypse" presents fifteen woodcuts of apocalyptic catastrophes, along with a small number of Gothic and Renaissance prints. Through March 17. . . . ¶ "The Fauve Landscape" brings together nearly a hundred and twenty-five paintings made between 1904 and 1908 by the principal Fauvists—Derain, Matisse, Braque, and their circle of friends. . . . ¶ Photographs from the fifties and sixties, selected from the museum's collection. Among the artists shown are William Klein, Helen Levitt, Bill Brandt, and Lisette Model. Through March 17. . . . ¶ Seventeen Dutch-style cupboards crafted in New York and New Jersey between 1650 and 1800. Through April 7. . . . ¶ "Sacred Mountains in Chinese Art." Through March 31. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Art of the Forties" is a cacophonous, exceptionally interesting show (including around three hundred works in many mediums, all from the museum's collection), chock-full of messy meanings and emotions and wild contrasts. There is Matisse's exultant "Jazz" but also the little-known Alton Pickens' perfectly ghoulish "Carnival." There is Pinin Farina's gleaming red sports car, the "Cistalia 202 GT," but also David Siqueiros' rough and mud-caked red "Hands." In short, the exhibition offers the viewer an intense and bifurcated picture of a decade that was itself schizophrenically fragmented. Through April 30. . . . ¶ "Liubov Popova." This unprecedented survey of paintings and drawings by an avant-gardist of the Russian revolutionary period provides an ideal counterpoint to the Malevich show currently at the Met. Popova (1889-1924) was clearly more of a sensualist, as well as a worldlier citizen, than her colleague. Her "Painterly Architectonics," for instance, from around 1916-18, which are among her best works, convey more visual charm but much less spiritual heat than Malevich's Suprematist icons. This exhibition is also at once more immediate but less dramatically moving than the one at the Met—perhaps in part because Popova died before the Stalinist chapter of the epic unfolded. With both shows in mind, however, one might politely suggest that Cubo-Futurism, seen en masse, is a bore. But Popova's brilliant book and costume designs are perhaps without rival in this period. Through April 23. . . . ¶ In the third of the museum's "Artist's Choice" series, Chuck Close, one of today's most enigmatic portraitists, has covered practically every available inch of the small gallery where "Christina's World" previously reigned with framed portraits from the museum's collection. Through March 19. . . . ¶ Fourteen panoramic photographs of Antarctica, taken in 1989 by Stuart Klipper. Through March 19. . . . ¶ "British Photography from the Thatcher Years." Through April 30. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)



Bill Jensen

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until autumn.

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—An exhibition of more than a hundred drawings by Jasper Johns. The works span the artist's career and are in a variety of mediums, including pencil, charcoal, pastel, oil crayon, and watercolor. Through April 7. . . . ¶ A small show of twenty-nine more or less surrealistic works on paper made between the late nineteen-thirties and the recent past. Many artists from the New York School—from Gerome Kamrowski to Robert Motherwell, from Pavel Tchelitchew to Jackson Pollock—are represented, along with such contemporary artists as Lee Bontecou and Carroll Dunham. Through April 7. . . . ¶ Sixty paintings, sculptures, and prints from the nineteen-eighties, including work by Barbara Kruger, Susan Rothenberg, and David Salle. Through March 24. . . . ¶ "Robert Rauschenberg: The Silk Screen Paintings, 1962-64." Through March 17. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Albert Bierstadt." Appropriately subtitled "Art & Enterprise," this show—the first major Bierstadt exhibition in almost twenty years—is good old vulgar entertainment. This German-born, more or less self-taught late-Hudson River School painter (1830-1902) was clearly a showman, a bit of a huckster, and politically incorrect in the extreme. In "The Last of the Buffalo" (1888), for instance, a Plains Indian brave is shown administering the symbolic coup de grâce—suggesting a version of history so twisted as to be obscene. (That this glaring matter is not addressed in the wall label seems strange.) The artist's huge panoramas of the West, known as "The Great Pictures," were first exhibited in well-publicized and highly theatrical settings, and one such installation has been re-created here to fine, carny effect. Bierstadt was an inspired stuntman-painter who relied on a grab bag of compositional and technical tricks to convey his visions of Manifest Destiny. Most often, this means anecdotal scenes and incidental details (dot-and-daub work) in the foregrounds, with broad and woozy strokes for mountains above and beyond. Compared to Frederic Church's infinitely more complex and refined vistas, Bierstadt's seem pretty hoary; compared to Caspar David Friedrich's poetically consumptive ones, they seem very crass. They are, however, great period pieces—and so are several of the original newspaper critiques of Bierstadt's work that have been reprinted for the show. Through May 5. . . . ¶ "Sewing and Reaping: A Weaver's Tale" is a large-scale lobby installation by Reeva Potoff. It is composed of huge, diagonal, veil-like "curtains" that are anchored by the room's two front columns. The curtains suggest nets, leaves, ashes—evanescent nature. One of the columns is wrapped in a skeinlike covering composed of pages from the great 1911 edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica—evanescent reason. The second column has a "skirt" of carbon paper—evanescent, or obsolescent, technology. The title refers to Velázquez's painting "The Fable of Arachne"—the tale of a mortal weaver whose hubris caused Athena to turn her into a spider. Potoff's materials and allusions may be lovely, but this piece is too fuzzy for us. Through March 31. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Manifest Destiny," a small show of rare nineteenth-century books and illustrations relating to government expeditions into "frontier" areas in the United States. Through April 30. . . . ¶ A show that examines the ecosystems of tropical rain forests around the world, such as those in the Congo basin, the Amazon basin, Madagascar, and Borneo. (Open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 9.)

American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, Broadway at 155th St.—An annual exhibition of contemporary paintings and sculptures. Artists represented include Martha Diamond, Theophilus Brown, Stanley Boxer, and Winifred Lutz. Through March 30. (Open daily, except Mondays, 1 to 4.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Romance of the Taj Mahal." The first half of this exhibition includes a tight and often dazzling display of objects from the court of Shah Jahan (1592-1666): an extensive and glorious collection of paintings to suit virtually every interest, from elegant depictions of court life to exquisite color studies of flowers; a rug intricately woven with two thousand knots per square inch; and magnificent rubies and emeralds. In the second half, which examines the hold the Taj Mahal has had on later generations of travellers and painters, this otherwise concise show becomes silly, with a succession of paintings ranging from mediocre to dreadful. Through March 17. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Albert Bierstadt at the Brooklyn Museum

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—Thirty-eight contemporary Japanese quilts in a show that

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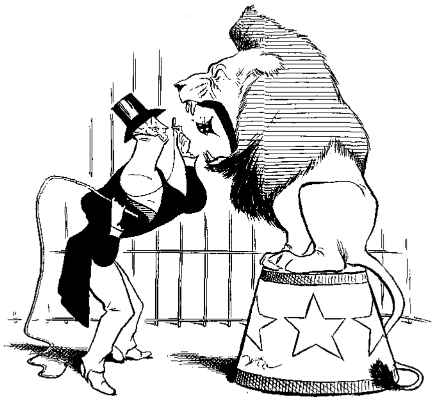

explores the American influence on Japanese quiltmaking. Starts March 13. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

Jewish Museum, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—A hundred sculptures and thirty-one drawings by Jacques Lipchitz. Through April 14. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 3.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"The Drawings of Anthony Van Dyck." Ninety sketches, studies, and more elaborate preparatory drawings by the master baroque portraitist (1599-1641). Through April 21. . . . ¶ A smaller selection of forty drawings by seventeenth-century Flemish artists such as Rubens, Jacob Jordaens, and David Vinckboons. Through April 21. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—A show of thirty-five antique and contemporary quilts, along with crib and doll quilts and several pieces of quilted clothing. Starts March 14. (Open daily, 9 to 9.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A beautiful and entertaining group of drawings by the influential Swiss Romantic Henry Fuseli (1745-1825), who lived in London. The marvellous, informal vividness of these drawings, which are on loan from the Auckland City Art Gallery, in New Zealand, has led scholars to believe that the whole lot may have been chosen by Fuseli as a present to an artist friend—conceivably William Blake. Mad eighteenth-century hairdos abound (move over, Frida Kahlo), along with highly literate depictions of scenes from Shakespeare and some very sexy interpretations of Greek mythology. In a melting "Eros and Psyche," from 1808, the curtain of modesty turns to vapor with one brush of Cupid's bow, and the artist, free now to boast, announces (in Greek), "This is, indeed, my Eros, not Titian's." Through March 24. . . . ¶ Eastman Johnson's "The Cranberry Harvest, Island of Nantucket" was first shown at the National Academy's 1880 annual exhibition, and it is now the centerpiece of a show that includes thirteen of the artist's other cranberry-harvest studies and paintings. Through March 24. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—The first document presented by the museum in the "Markers of Change" series will be one of the twenty-three surviving copies of the Declaration of Independence. Starts March 14. . . . ¶ "Art What Thou Eat" is a show of eighty nineteenth- and twentieth-century paintings and sculptures, all having to do with those three square meals a day. Images range from Samuel Marsden Brookes' "Steelhead Salmon" (1885) to David Wojnarowicz's "Tuna" (1983). Through March 22. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Queens Museum, Flushing Meadow Park—"The AIDS Epidemic Series": twenty-one large-scale paintings and eight drawings by Luis Cruz Azaceta. Through April 14. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—A show of forty works from the museum's collection (many recently acquired), including pieces by Romare Bearden, Betye and Alison Saar, Robert Colescott, and Sam Gilliam. Through March 17. . . . ¶ "From the Studio: Artists-in-Residence, 1989-90." Twenty-nine sculptures by Raûl Acero, Paul Gardère, and Jerome Meadows. Through March 17. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Brice Marden—The sight of Marden's classic seventies "Grove Group," assembled for the first time, is a slow, considerable pleasure and is also of historical note. The five abstract greenish paintings, inspired by sojourns in Greece, seem fired by landscape, tempered by architecture, and glazed by a sort of neo-Ruskinian moral anxiety, as well as, more literally, by the artist's characteristically lapidary encaustic technique. Through March 16. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Short List—**hannelore baron,** Mathes, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (through April 20); **ralston crawford,** Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. (through April 20); **markus lüpertz,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. (through March 30); **richard oelze,** Lafayette Parke, 58 E. 79th St. (through March 16); **jonathan santlofer,** Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. (through March 30); **john walker,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through April 2); **max weber,** Forum, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. (through April 6).

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

James Coleman—A major, museum-quality exhibition of narrative works by an Irish artist little known in this country. "Charon," a slick slide presentation with a documentary-style voice-over, consists of fourteen vignettes about "the photographer," a mutable character who is variably male and female, black and white, young and old, director and model. Through stories situated in such places as the photographer's studio or apartment, the perfect model rooms of Bloomingdale's, or the mind of the photographer's child, Coleman explores issues of memory with layer upon layer of pose and self-reflection, so that all perception eventually collapses into the crystal-clear confusion of a hall of mirrors. In one vignette, for example, the photographer falls asleep while serving as his own model and is startled when he awakens to find the self-timer clicking pictures of him looking exactly the way he initially sought to pose himself. In an endlessly thought-provoking way, the artist defines, as the title suggests, a netherworld of image-recording where awareness ferries between life and death. The show also includes a major video work as well as three films that can be viewed upon request. One of these, "Box," alternates footage from the controversial Tunney-Dempsey rematch of 1927, which is flashed against the wall like sparks of light accompanied by a heartbeat rhythm, with a soundtrack of Tunney's whispered thoughts about the fight, identity, and life. The film is shown as a continuous loop, with the historic knockdown and decision omitted, so that the fighters are left battling ad infinitum. Through March 23. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

R. M. Fischer—The artist, who is known for his pranksterish wit, is now entering maturity with a group of sculptures of graceful fluidity and line. With great style, Fischer has effortlessly combined such diverse materials as chunky newel posts, cheap fifties lamps, and no-tech kitchen and plumbing supplies in a way that might best be described as H. G. Wells Victorian futurism. Even though the lamps are lit, they are no longer lamps, just as the tubes and pots of pumped water are more studies of circulation than fountains, and the clock hands are more about movement than about time. Although not very amusing, these pieces have a contained dignity. The inclusion of elements such as brass fixtures from a synagogue even lend the work a certain sentimentality and a hitherto undetectable hint of the personal. Through March 23. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Short List—**joe andoe** and **james rosenquist,** Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St. (through March 23); **karel appel,** Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. (through April 6); **alice dalton brown** and **polly kraft,** Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. (through March 23); **robert caracciolo,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 30); **john chamberlain,** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (through April 13); **dieter hacker,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through March 30); **bill jensen** and **alice trumbull mason,** Washburn, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 30); **gwen john,** Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. (through March 23); **wolf kahn,** Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through March 30); **melissa meyer** and **jim melchert,** Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through March 23); **robert andrew parker,** Feiwel, 24 W. 57th St. (through April 13); **milton resnick** and **eva hesse,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 30); **william tucker,** McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through March 30); **timothy woodman** and **yasuo kuniyoshi,** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through April 6).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Beauford Delaney (1901-79)—A retrospective of paintings by an overlooked artist who lived the last twenty-five years of his life in Paris. There is a certain naïveté to the work, but much of it proves to be quietly intelligent. In a large scene of Washington Square from 1951 the artist demonstrates that he has learned the lessons of Cézanne and of the Fauvists, and adds his own Dufyesque, decorative delight in street life. Through March 30. (Briet, 558 Broadway.)

Louise Fishman—Highly accomplished dark, dark paintings made with thick paint applied with wide brushes. "Moraine," which is as dark as a painting can get without being black, is calmly unsettling. "Lamentations" has a wide teal band running across its center, an emphatic gesture of constriction and cancellation. Through March 23. (Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway.)

IN PERPETUITY

Stephen Antonakos's latest neon public work in the metropolitan area resembles two of his previous projects in that it is visible to a significant chunk of the local population every day. But unlike those earlier commissions—four red-and-blue swirls on a low brick building on 42nd Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues, and fifteen rainbow-hued curlicues and arcs on an escalator ceiling at the PATH *train's Exchange Place station, in Jersey City—the new work is nearly minimalist. At the Marine Transfer Station, a new covered pier on the Hudson River at 59th Street, from which Department of Sanitation trucks will soon spill their fetid cargo onto waiting barges, Antonakos has outlined the building's side-by-side pair of classical pediments with red and blue. He has set two lime-green arcs in the center of each pediment, and has added a bar of red or blue to both. And he has set twenty-six three-by-five-foot red neon rectangles along a window that runs the length of the pier's thousand-foot-long northern wall, visible from the West Side Highway. Because the windowpanes, which are made of plastic, are frosted, and because the neon is installed indoors, at night the squares fill with a soft glow. The effect is subdued, stately, and somewhat spiritual, like the halos above votive candles in a dimly lit church.*

Antonakos prefers that none of his neon ever be switched off. "Neon has a life of its own, its own schedule to follow, which we shouldn't disrupt," he says. "At sunset it wakes up, by eight o'clock it's amazing, by midnight it's paradise, and then slowly it goes back to sleep."

George Ohr (1857-1918)—A healthy selection of the wacky, bashed-in pots and cups of the self-proclaimed "Mad Potter of Biloxi." Through March 23. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

David Reed—Nobody creates as gorgeous a surface as Reed does. As in the past, his newest paintings, which are abstract in the old sense of the word, consist of quickly applied broad, wavelike paint strokes, as velvety as the voluminous drapery in Italian Mannerist and baroque painting. The lightly colored works —there is one in pink and aqua, for example —are not as immediately seductive as some of the darker paintings, but with prolonged viewing you begin to see that these taffy colors are saturated with light. The horizontal works take on the presence of predella paintings, while the vertical ones suggest a filmic sequence. Through March 23. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

David Row—An impressive, full-bodied show of six recent paintings by an outstanding youngish painter whose innate reserve has, in the past, led to very elegant work lacking vividness and vitality. Row's new paintings, at long last, have color—beautiful, off-key, hothouse colors that fall somewhere between the palettes of de Kooning and the designer Romeo Gigli. Row is an intense surface worrier and a segmenter of planes. In this sense he is a disciple of both Brice Marden and, increasingly, it would seem, Sean Scully. Here, on canvases both traditionally and irregularly shaped, he layers, rubs, scumbles, and waxes as usual. But where once this process resulted in works as straitlaced as school uniforms, it now leads to things as mysterious, acid, and juicy as pomegranates. Through March 23. (Good, 532 Broadway.)

Karin Sander—This young German artist attempts to create a literally "uplifting" experience in this novel installation, in which she has constructed a new floor about a half foot above the old one, and left a six-and-a-half-inch gap around the perimeter. What she has actually created is hyper-self-consciousness and little else. Through March 30. (Bitter-Larkin, 597 Broadway.)

Franz Erhard Walther / Sol LeWitt—Walther has been a major figure in Germany for several decades, but he was completely unknown here until a few years ago, when this gallery mounted a mini-survey of his performance-related object making. His new works here consist of constructions of dyed canvas sewn into deep rectangular shapes, arranged in constructivistic groupings. Without some background information, the groupings, which look like syntactic equations, remain fairly mute. / Four wall drawings, from 1973 to 1974, that are among the artist's least visually seductive but also among his more strategically engaging. The most compelling is "The Location of Eight Points on One Wall," executed according to a complex and insanely rational set of instructions about locating midpoints. The work and the instructions seem to be a parable of the search for middle ground in a manner bordering on theatre of the absurd. Through March 23. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

"7 Women"—A very interesting show of works that describe how men see women. For Mel Ramos, the prototypical woman poses as gas-station cheesecake, and for John de Andrea she crouches on the floor, vulnerably naked. For Yves Klein she was literally used as a paintbrush. For Stephen Balkenkol she is a hacked landscape. For Thomas Ruff she is a placid blank slate awaiting life, but for Robert Mapplethorpe she is the sculptor Louise Bourgeois—strong, independent, resolute, with one of her defiantly sexy sculptures confidently tucked under her arm, as if it were her holster. Through March 23. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

"Artists' Books"—This somewhat deceptively titled show does not include many examples of the cheap, mass-produced, ephemeral works that are known as "artists' books," although there are a few of them, including Ed Ruscha's "The Sunset Strip," which consists of black-and-white photos of just that. There are works by some significant contemporary book artists, like Sol LeWitt, but none of the works that are key to the field are here. Instead, the exhibition's emphasis is on exquisitely produced books, many of them with fine prints, and on collaborations between known artists and writers, like Barbara Kruger and Stephen King, or Jasper Johns and Samuel Beckett. Most of the work is from the past few years, and it is installed in a lively way. There are delightful, tiny, inexpensive books printed in India by Hanuman Press, which on every level are debatable as artists' books, and there are also attempts to introduce the "reader" to new interpretations of the "book," such as a videotape of Jenny Holzer's "Laments." In short, there is much to savor here if you don't hold the show to its title. Through March 30. (Lorence-Monk, 568 Broadway.)

Short List—**Vito Acconci**, Gladstone, 99 Greene St. (through April 6); **René Pierre Allain**, Pretto, 54 MacDougal St. (through March 23); **Elizabeth Dworkin**, Munroe, 130 Prince St. (through March 30); **Dan Flavin**, Boone, 417 West Broadway (through March 30); **Kim Jones**, Lorence-Monk, 578 Broadway (through March 30); **Anna and Wolfgang Kubach-Wilmsen**, Staempfli, 415 West Broadway (through March 30); **Robert Mangold**, Cooper, 149 Wooster St. (through April 6); **Robert Morris**, Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway, and 65 Thompson Street Gallery (both through March 30); **Mel Pekarsky**, Einstein, 591 Broadway (through March 30); **David Rabinowitch**, Flynn, 113 Crosby St. (through April 30); **Tony Smith**, Cooper, 155 Wooster St. (through March 30); **Colin Thomson**, Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. (opens at noon on Saturdays, through April 6).

PHOTOGRAPHY

Madoka Takagi, a young Japanese photographer, is having her first one-person exhibition, at the Min-Lowinsky gallery (584 Broadway; through April 27). Her work is promising and unpretentious, though not always memorable. She definitely has the makings of a fine observer. This show comprises urban views from around New York; because of the platinum process Takagi uses for her prints, the overall quality is of high refinement. Of all the photographs, we were most impressed by an aerial view of Central Park. It's a winter picture: the light is foggy, the trees are stark. This is a hauntingly gentle photograph of a place that, although it has come to represent fear, is still a testament to fantasy and man-made dreams.

In addition to Takagi's exhibition, the gallery is showing a selection of prints by Eugène Atget. And these, of course, are unforgettable.

Bruce Charlesworth—Lately, it seems as if Hollywood has become the favorite source of inspiration for photography, replacing that old perennial, nature. This show, titled "Man and Nature," presents Orwellian-setup photographs, often of people in scary situations, that bring to mind David Lynch and Stephen King. Although Charlesworth's wit and versatility have always been impressive, here his combination of horror and humor feels thin. Through March 16. (Baum, 588 Broadway.)

Jacques Henri Lartigue (1894-1986)—A delightful group of photographs, ranging from those the artist took when he was a small boy to those he did in his mid-forties. The earliest pictures make a convincing argument for innate talent in photography. Through March 16. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway.)

Short List—**Sarah Charlesworth**, Gorney, 100 Greene St. (through March 30); **Mary Heller**, Ledel, 168 Mercer St. (opens at noon, Wednesdays through Saturdays, through April 6); **Peter Hujar**, Danziger, 415 West Broadway (through March 30); **Stuart Klipper**, Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9, through March 19); **Grace Knowlton**, Witkin, 415 West Broadway (opens at noon on Saturdays, through April 6); **Lisette Model**, International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6; through March 24); **Lucas Samaras**, Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through March 30); **Aaron Siskind**, Sikkema, 155 Spring St. (opens at noon on Saturdays, through March 16).

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MOSCHINO

MUSIC

ABOUT a hundred years ago, Jean de Reszke, the *beau idéal* of the Franco-Italian operatic stage, startled the world by undertaking, systematically and in German, the great heroes of Wagner's music dramas. There had been a public campaign to goad him into this course of action: George Bernard Shaw, for example, had repeatedly painted for his readers a tenor so self-satisfied that if he could be permitted to sustain his reputation with a single annual appearance as Gounod's Roméo, he would do no more. Perhaps the critics got to him.

Placido Domingo, who just turned fifty, has apparently undertaken a similar project. It is a little startling to realize that this still seems adventurous a century after de Reszke did it. (Suppose it were announced that Mr. Domingo would record the vocal works of Elliott Carter and join the cast of the next John Adams–Peter Sellars production.) But the fact is that while Wagner's operas are no longer regarded as experiments on the fringe of the musically possible, mastery of them by Latin singers is still extremely rare. Mr. Domingo has already sung Lohengrin and recorded Tannhäuser and Walther in "Meistersinger"; now he has announced his intention to perform Siegmund on the stage and he is about to give New York his first Parsifal. Perhaps he, too, has an eye on posterity's verdict—but perhaps it is too easy to be cynical about either Mr. Domingo or Mr. de Reszke. Mr. Domingo is musician enough to conduct a symphony orchestra competently; perhaps there is a dimension to his musical intelligence that craves the complexities and richness of Wagner.

Still, there is something unlikely about the attempt; something in the sound of Italianate voices (including Mr. Domingo's) often seems not too light (though sometimes that is the case as well) but too insistent in Wagner—sharp and pointed where roundness and depth are wanted. This is fitting: the tenor heroes of Italian opera spend a great deal of their time on the stage insisting. We do not see Manrico or Edgardo or Rodolfo standing around thinking; they may soliloquize, but reflection is not in them. It is in Siegmund and Siegfried; that is one of the things that makes them different. The core of Parsifal is reflection upon sin and redemption; more than half his singing in the five-hour score is concentrated into the last twenty minutes or so of Act II, and the non-intellectual tenor will find himself at a loss here. It is this, perhaps, more than the mechanics of mastering German words or Wagnerian tessitura, that presents Mr. Domingo with a challenge and an opportunity.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; for the Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St., 570-3949; and for the 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 415-5440.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**LE NOZZE DI FIGARO,** with Kiri Te Kanawa, Marie McLaughlin, Frederica von Stade, Jorma Hynninen, and Samuel Ramey; conducted by James Conlon. (March 11 at 8.) . . . With Felicity Lott, Marie McLaughlin, Frederica von Stade, Andreas Schmidt, and Samuel Ramey; James Conlon. (March 16 and March 20 at 8.) . . . **DER ROSENKAVALIER,** with Mechthild Gessendorf, Delores Ziegler, Barbara Kilduff, and Aage Haugland; Jiři Kout. (March 12 at 7:30.) . . . With Mechthild Gessendorf, mezzo-soprano to be announced, Barbara Kilduff, and Artur Korn; Jiři Kout. (March 15 at 7:30.) . . . **KÁTA KABANOVÁ,** a new production of Janáček's opera, with Gabriela Beňačková, Leonie Rysanek, Susan Quittmeyer, Wieslaw Ochman, and Aage Haugland; Charles Mackerras. (March 13 at 8 and March 16 at 1:30.) . . . With Gabriela Beňačková, Mignon Dunn, Susan Quittmeyer, Wieslaw Ochman, and Aage Haugland; Charles Mackerras. (March 19 at 8.) . . . **PARSIFAL,** the opening of a new production, directed by Otto Schenk. With Jessye Norman, Placido Domingo, Ekkehard Wlaschiha, Franz Mazura, Paul Plishka, and Robert Lloyd; James Levine. (March 14 and March 18 at 6:30.)

Mitsuko Uchida

Operaworks—David Leighton conducts staged performances with varying casts. **CARMEN** (March 15 at 8:15 and March 17 at 8). . . . **LA TRAVIATA** (March 16 and March 19 at 8). . . . A triple bill of **PAGLIACCI, THE MEDIUM,** and Act III of **LOHENGRIN** (March 20 at 8). (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. For information about tickets, call 769-6854.)

Paride ed Elena—Gluck's 1770 opera, in concert, conducted by Will Crutchfield. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. March 17 at 3 and March 19 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall. March 12 at 7:30: Christopher Keene conducts Mozart's Symphony No. 19 and Piston's Symphony No. 4, and soprano Arleen Auger is the featured soloist in Ravel's "Shéhérazade" and Mozart's concert aria "Ch'io mi scordi di te" (with Harriet Wingreen playing the obbligato piano part in the last). . . . ¶ March 14-16 at 8 and March 19 at 7:30: Paavo Berglund conducts Mozart's Symphony No. 32 (the so-called "Italian Overture"), Beethoven's Symphony No. 2, and Prokofiev's Second Piano Concerto (with Horacio Gutiérrez).

Israel Philharmonic—At Carnegie Hall, Zubin Mehta conducting. March 12 at 8: Dvořák's Seventh Symphony and Beethoven's Violin Concerto (with Itzhak Perlman). . . . ¶ March 14 at 8: Symphonies by Mozart (his Forty-first), Brahms (his Fourth), and Josef Tal (his Second).

Cincinnati Symphony—Jesús López-Cobos conducts Mendelssohn's "Elijah," with soprano Faye Robinson, mezzo-soprano Florence Quivar, tenor John Aler, baritone Benjamin Luxon, and the May Festival Chorus. (Carnegie Hall. March 15 at 8.)

Cincinnati Pops—Erich Kunzel conducts highlights of scores from notable Hollywood films, including "Gone with the Wind" (by Max Steiner), "Psycho" (by Bernard Herrmann), and "Captain Blood" (by Erich Wolfgang Korngold); and singer-pianist Cab Calloway is featured in, among other selections, his own "Minnie the Moocher" (which is performed in "The Blues Brothers"). (Carnegie Hall. March 16 at 8.)

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra—Yoel Levi conducting. March 16 at 8:30: Barber's "School for Scandal" Overture, Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony, and Mozart's D-Minor Piano Concerto (with Emanuel Ax). (Colden Center for the Performing Arts, Queens College, Flushing. 1-718 793-8080.) . . . ¶ March 17 at 3: Mahler's Symphony No. 2 (the "Resurrection"), with soprano Hei-Kyung Hong, mezzo-soprano Janice Taylor, and the Atlanta Symphony Chorus. (Avery Fisher Hall.)

New York Chamber Symphony—The Swiss conductor Paul Sacher leads works by Stravinsky, Bartók, and Mozart (his Fourth Violin Concerto, with Gil Shahan). (92nd Street Y. March 16 at 8 and March 17 at 3.)

Philadelphia Orchestra—Riccardo Muti conducts music by Elgar and Tchaikovsky (his Violin Concerto, with Anne-Sophie Mutter), as well as the première of Bernard Rands' "Ceremonial 3 for Orchestra," commissioned to celebrate Carnegie Hall's centennial. (Carnegie Hall. March 18 at 8.) . . . **NOTE:** The concert is preceded at 6:45 by a discussion with Mr. Rands, open to ticket-holders.

Scottish Chamber Orchestra—Jukka-Pekka Saraste conducts Beethoven's Second Symphony, Stravinsky's "Dumbarton Oaks" Concerto, and Rodrigo's "Concierto de Aranjuez" (with classical guitarist Christopher Parkening). (Carnegie Hall. March 19 at 8.)

Musica Sacra—Richard Westenburg directs the choir in music by Max Reger and Bernard Rands, as well as in arrangements and original compositions by Ward Swingle. (Alice Tully Hall. March 16 at 8.)

I Cantori di New York—Mark Shapiro directs the twenty-four-voice choir in Bernstein's Missa Brevis, Britten's "Rejoice in the Lamb," and Duruflé's Requiem. (St. Ignatius' Episcopal Church, West End Ave. at 87th St. March 16 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Stonewall Chorale and the Lesbian and Gay Chorus of Washington, D.C.—Bill Pflugradt directs the combined forces in a program that includes Brahms' "Zigeunerlieder," Barber's "Reincarnations," and Vaughan Williams' "Toward the Unknown Region." (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. March 16 at 8. For information about tickets, call 608-4504.)

Fiori Musicali—Presenting the choir and soloists of the Church of St. Luke in-the-Fields (directed by David Shuler) and the Fairfield Period Instrument Orchestra (led by Thomas Crawford), in performances of Schütz's "Musicalisches Exequien," J. S. Bach's Fifth "Brandenburg" Concerto, and a symphony by C. P. E. Bach. (Church of St. Luke in-the-Fields, 487 Hudson St., at Grove St. 633-2167. March 17 at 4.)

Choral Symphony Society—David Labovitz directs, among other works, Barber's "Reincarnations"; Brahms' "Liebeslieder Waltzes," Op. 52; and Janáček's Mass in E-Flat. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. March 17 at 7:30. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

St. Thomas Choir—With soloists and the Orchestra of St. Luke's, all directed by Gerre Hancock, performing sacred works by Holst, Finzi, Britten, and Walton. (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. 757-7013. March 19 at 7:30.)

RECITALS

Guarneri and Ridge String Quartets—Performing quartets by Beethoven and Dvořák, as well as works for octet by Strauss and Shostakovich. (Alice Tully Hall. March 13 at 8.)

Classical Quartet—Playing chamber music for strings by Mozart: a duo, a quartet, and (with guest artist Stephanie Chase) a quintet. (Merkin Concert Hall. March 13 at 8.)

Debra Vanderlinde—Soprano, in a recital that spotlights songs by Hugo Wolf; with pianist Brian Zeger. (92nd Street Y. March 13 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Ik-Hwan Bae and Nai-Yuan Hu perform violin duos, and pianist Mihae Lee accompanies them in music by Moszkowski and Martinů. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. March 14 at 7:30 and March 17 at 4.)

Where were you on Monday night between the hours of 9 and 10?

AGATHA CHRISTIE MYSTERIES.
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MUSIC—Cont'd

Isaac Stern—The violinist, who inaugurated the Metropolitan Museum's concert series, in 1954, celebrates his seventieth birthday there—eight months after the fact—by performing sonatas by Mozart, Brahms, and Dvořák, and shorter works by Schumann and Szymanowski; assisted by pianist Robert McDonald. (Metropolitan Museum. March 14 at 8.)

Michaël Levinas, Jean-Claude Pennetier, and Georges Pludermacher—At Alice Tully Hall. The three French pianists present twentieth-century keyboard works by Xenakis, Maurice Ohana, André Boucourechliev, and others. (March 14 at 8.) . . . ¶ In an unusual concert exercise in comparative listening, the pianists offer consecutive interpretations of Beethoven's "Hammerklavier" Sonata, Op. 106. Messrs. Levinas and Pludermacher will each play on a modern Steinway grand, while Mr. Pennetier will perform on an 1855 Broadwood instrument (a descendant of the piano presented by the English builder Thomas Broadwood to Beethoven in 1818, when the composer was in the midst of creating the "Hammerklavier"). (March 16 at 2.)

Mitsuko Uchida—The pianist, especially noted as an interpreter of Mozart, begins her five-concert survey of the composer's piano sonatas with sonatas in G (K. 283), B-flat (K. 333), F (K. 280), and D (K. 284). (Alice Tully Hall. March 15 at 8.)

Michala Petri and the Cavani String Quartet—The Danish recorder player and the Cleveland-based quartet perform concertos by Vivaldi and Sammartini, as well as the première of a Fantasy by Malcolm Arnold; and the Cavani foursome plays Tchaikovsky's Quartet No. 1. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. March 15 at 8.)

Ivan Moravec—Piano, performing two Beethoven sonatas (the "Pathétique" and the "Appassionata") and two Debussy suites (the "Suite Bergamasque" and "Pour le Piano"). (Metropolitan Museum. March 15 at 8.)

David Wolf—The French violinist performs an Ysaÿe solo sonata and (assisted by pianist Hélène Jeanney) works by Schubert, Bartók, and Corigliano. (Weill Recital Hall. March 16 at 5:30.)

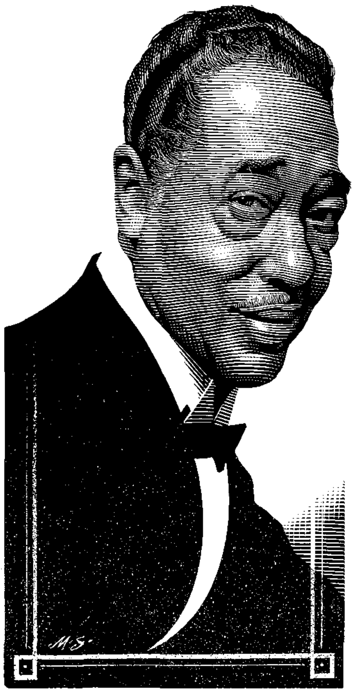
Guarneri Quartet—Playing string quartets by Beethoven and Szymanowski, as well as Mozart's Clarinet Quintet (with Charles Neidich). (Metropolitan Museum. March 16 at 8.)

David Tanenbaum—The classical guitarist's recital includes works by Henze, Sofia Gubaidulina, Lou Harrison, and Peter Maxwell Davies. (Merkin Concert Hall. March 16 at 8.)

Downtown Music Productions—Presenting chamber music by Smetana, Michael Sahl, Robert Baksa, and Ervín Schulhoff (his "Hot Sonata," for alto saxophone and piano, composed in 1930). Schulhoff, a Czech pianist and composer born in 1894, studied with Max Reger and Debussy, became allied with the Dadaists and other avant-garde types, and enthusiastically promoted the performance of quarter-tone music; but his career was cut short by the Second World War, and he perished in 1942 in the Wurtzburg concentration camp. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. March 16 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Alexander Schneider and Friends—The violinist heads a string quartet that is joined by narrator Schuyler Chapin to perform Haydn's "Seven Last Words of Christ." (New School, 66 W. 12th St. March 17 at 2. For information about tickets, call 741-5689.)

Benjamin Verdery—Classical guitar, performing his own compositions, as well as works by Lou Harrison, Daniel Asia, and others; with assisting artists. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. March 17 at 3. Admission by contribution.)



Duke Ellington

Ridge String Quartet—Performing Beethoven's Quartet, Op. 59, No. 3 (the third "Razumovsky") and Dvořák's G-Major Quintet (with guest double bassist John Feeney). Presented by the Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music. (Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, 85 S. Oxford St., Brooklyn. March 17 at 3:30. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Pianists John Browning and Charles Wadsworth are guests in a program of Mozart, Schumann, Ravel, and Barber. (Alice Tully Hall. March 17 at 5 and March 19 at 7:30.)

"The Passover Story"—A musical pastiche, featuring the Western Wind vocal sextet, an instrumental group, and narrator Jerry Stiller. (Merkin Concert Hall. March 17 at 7.)

Vladimir Viardo—The pianist completes his survey of lesser-known Russian keyboard works by performing music by Balakirev, Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev, and Vladimir Ryabov. (Alice Tully Hall. March 18 at 8.)

Peter Frankl and the Shanghai String Quartet—The Hungarian pianist joins the quartet to perform three piano concertos by Mozart—K. 413, 414, and 415—in the composer's own transcriptions for reduced forces. (92nd Street Y. March 19 at 8.)

Juilliard String Quartet—Performing quartets by Mozart, Beethoven (his Op. 130, with the "Grosse Fuge" attached), and Carter (his Second). (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. March 19 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 874-7515.)

Eugenia Zukerman and Anthony Newman—The flutist and the harpsichordist perform music by Biber, Couperin, Leclair, and Tartini. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. March 20 at 6. Tickets at the door on the evening of the concert.)

Tokyo String Quartet—Performing a Mozart program: three quartets and (with violist Pinchas Zukerman) the C-Major Quintet, K. 515. (Alice Tully Hall. March 20 at 8.)

Thomas Trotter—In his New York début, the English organist (who is noted for his performance of orchestral transcriptions) presents a program likely to use a large percentage of the 12,422 pipes in the St. Bartholomew Church's five-manual Æolian-Skinner organ. The concert will include Duruflé's "Prelude and Fugue on the Name of Alain," sonatas by Edward Bairstow and Alexandre Guilmant, and an arrangement of Saint-Saëns' "Danse Macabre." (Park Ave. at 50th St. 751-1616, ext. 226. March 20 at 8.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK
PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Anthony Davis Group and Marilyn Crispell—Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. March 12 at 8.

"Highlights in Jazz"—Panama Francis, Big Nick Nicholas, Buddy Tate, and others. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. March 14 at 8.)

Dizzy Gillespie—With Eartha Kitt, Mongo Santamaria, and the Jay Hoggard quartet. (Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 864-0372. March 15 at 7 and 11.)

"Women in Song"—March 15 at 8: Thokoza, with Thuli Dumakude, and Women of the Calabash. . . . ¶ March 16 at 8: Suni Paz and Maria Olga Piñeros. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. For information about tickets, call 545-7536.)

José José—Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. March 15-16 at 8.

"Wall to Wall Ellington"—A twelve-hour celebration of the Duke's music, with performances by Bobby Short, Julie Wilson, and the Duke Ellington orchestra (conducted by Mercer Ellington), among others. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. March 16, from 11 A.M. to 11 P.M. No tickets necessary.)

Paul Simon—Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. March 16 at 8.

Marcus Roberts—St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. March 16 at 8.

"New Sounds"—The Horse Flies, Rare Air, and Pat Kilbride. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. March 17 at 3.)

The Chieftains and James Galway—Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. March 17 at 7:30.

Guy Yarden—Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. March 18 at 8.

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Knicks—Vs. the Nets, March 11. . . . ¶ Vs. the Miami Heat, March 14. . . . ¶ Vs. the Cleveland Cavaliers, March 20. (Game time, 7:30.)

Nets—Vs. the Detroit Pistons, March 14 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Washington Bullets, March 16 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Charlotte Hornets, March 17 at 7. . . . ¶ Vs. the Minnesota Timberwolves, March 20 at 7:30.

Rangers—Vs. the Detroit Red Wings, March 13 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Pittsburgh Penguins, March 17 at 1:30.

Islanders—Away until March 21, when they face the Washington Capitals.

Devils—Vs. the Toronto Maple Leafs, March 13. . . . ¶ Vs. the Rangers, March 15. . . . ¶ Vs. the Pittsburgh Penguins, March 19. (Game time, 7:45.)

(The Knicks and the Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Nets and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

RACING

Horses—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8, and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Green—The annual St. Patrick's Day Parade starts at 11 A.M. on March 16. It begins at Fifth Ave. and 44th St. and continues up the Avenue to 86th St. The grand marshal this year is Mary Holt Moore, a New York City public-school teacher. More than a hundred and fifty thousand people will be marching, and ten million will be watching the spectacle on television.

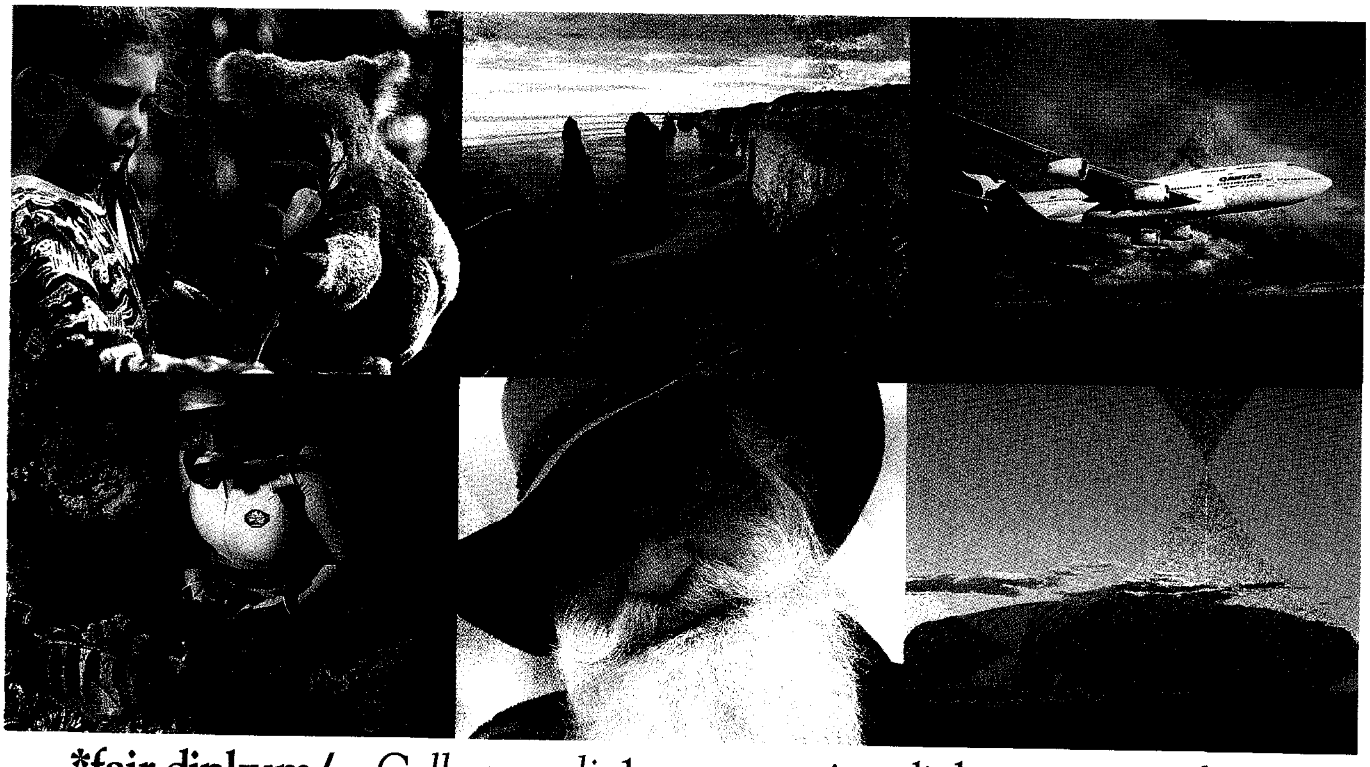
Greek—A walking tour of Astoria, where a hundred thousand Greek-Americans reside, takes place on March 16. Capping the walk is lunch in a Greek restaurant. For information and reservations, call 265-2663.

Yeats—An evening-length reading of the poet's work, sometimes put to music. Pauline Flanagan, Patrick Fitzgerald, Paula Kenny, Kitty Sullivan, and other members of the Irish Repertory Theatre are among the featured readers. (Douglas Fairbanks Theatre, 432 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. March 17 at 7:30.)

Readings—March 13 at 6:30: Jerry Zaks, Malachy McCourt, Stephen Lang, and Thuli Dumakude read stories by John Cheever, Luisa Valenzuela, Donald Barthelme, and Njabulo S. Ndebele. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) . . . ¶ March 18 at 8: Hayden Carruth and Lynne Sharon Schwartz read from their own works. (92nd Street Y, Lexingtion Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.)

Talks—March 13 at 7: Yehuda Amichai and Charles Simic talk about poetry and the politics of Israel. (Brotherhood Synagogue, 28 Gramercy Park S. Tickets at the door on the night of the talk.) . . . ¶ March 13 at 7:30: Bill McKibben talks about nature with Gary Snyder. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 14 at 6:30: Laura Dean, Garth Fagan, David Gordon, Alan M. Kriegsman, Ralph Lemon, and David White talk about choreography. (New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. For information about tickets, call 870-1670.) . . . ¶ March 18 at 6: William Safire talks about politics. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. For information about tickets, call 930-0571.) . . . ¶ March 19 at 6:30: Jeffrey Deitch, Tony Hiss, Greg Watson, and Tucker Viemeister talk about the state of nature in the year 2000. (Spence School, 22 E. 91st St. For information about tickets, call 860-6862.)

Fair Dinkum* Australia.



***fair dinkum/** —*Colloq.*—*adj.* 1: true, genuine, dinkum ‹are you fair dinkum?›—*interj.* 2: assertion of truth or genuineness ‹it's true, mate, fair dinkum› 3: Come have a fair dinkum great time in Australia.

QANTAS
THE SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA

Australia
Come and say G'day.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20			

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)

Theatre 1: "Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead" (†).

Theatre 2: "Closet Land" (directed by Radha Bharadwaj), with Madeleine Stowe and Alan Rickman.

Theatre 3: "La Femme Nikita" (Luc Besson; in French).

Theatre 4: "Shadow of China" (Mitsuo Yanagimachi), with John Lone.

Theatre 5: "Iron & Silk" (Shirley Sun).

Theatre 6: "Cyrano de Bergerac" (Jean-Paul Rappeneau, in French), with Gérard Depardieu.

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)

"Because of That War" (1988, Orna Ben-Dor Niv; in Hebrew) and "Berlin/Jerusalem" (1989, Amos Gitai; in German).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)

Theatre 1: "The Doors" (†).

Theatre 2: "Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).

Theatre 3: Through March 14: "The Doors" (†). From March 15: "If Looks Could Kill" (William Dear), with Richard Grieco.

Cinema 12, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

"The Vanishing" (†).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave at 12th. (529-6799)

Theatre 1: "Scenes from a Mall" (Paul Mazursky), with Bette Midler and Woody Allen.

Theatre 2: "The Sleazy Uncle" (Franco Brusati; in Italian), with Vittorio Gassman.

Theatre 3: "Superstar: The Life and Times of Andy Warhol" (Chuck Workman).

Theatre 4: "Mr. & Mrs. Bridge" (†).

Theatre 5: "The Field" (Jim Sheridan), with Richard Harris.

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)

Theatre 1: "The Godfather Part III" (†).

Theatre 2: "Dances with Wolves" (†).

Theatre 3: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).

Theatre 4: Through March 14: "He Said, She Said" (Ken Kwapis and Marisa Silver), with Kevin Bacon, Elizabeth Perkins, and Sharon Stone. From March 15: "The Perfect Weapon" (Mark DiSalle).

Theatre 5: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).

Theatre 6: Through March 14: "L.A. Story" (†). From March 15: "Guilty by Suspicion" (Irwin Winkler), with Robert De Niro.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)

Through March 14: (Matinées only) "Shipwrecked" (Nils Gaup); and (evenings only) "Vincent & Theo" (†).

From March 15: "Cadence" (Martin Sheen).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)

"The Hard Way" (John Badham), with Michael J. Fox and James Woods.

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)

Theatre 1: "Green Card" (†).

Theatre 2: "Hamlet" (†).

Theatre 3: "The Field" (Jim Sheridan), with Richard Harris.

Theatre 4: Through March 14: "Scenes from a Mall" (Paul Mazursky), with Bette Midler and Woody Allen. From March 15: "Class Action" (Michael Apted), with Gene Hackman and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)

Theatre 1: Through March 14: "He Said, She Said" (Ken Kwapis and Marisa Silver), with Kevin Bacon, Elizabeth Perkins, and Sharon Stone. From March 15: "The Perfect Weapon" (Mark DiSalle).

Theatre 2: Through March 14: "New Jack City" (Mario Van Peebles), with Wesley Snipes. From March 15: "If Looks Could Kill" (William Dear), with Richard Grieco.

Theatre 3: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)

"Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)

"GoodFellas" (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)

Theatre 1: Through March 14: (Matinées only) "Shipwrecked" (Nils Gaup); and (evenings only) "Vincent & Theo" (†). From March 15: "Reunion" (Jerry Schatzberg), with Jason Robards.

Theatre 2: Through March 14: "Superstar: The Life and Times of Andy Warhol" (Chuck Workman). From March 15: "Cadence" (Martin Sheen), with Charlie Sheen.

deMichiell

At the Beekman, John Cusack and James Spader in "True Colors"

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)

"Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)

"Cyrano de Bergerac" (Jean-Paul Rappeneau, in French), with Gérard Depardieu.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)

Theatre 1: "Awakenings" (†).

Theatre 2: Through March 14: "New Jack City" (Mario Van Peebles), with Wesley Snipes. From March 15: "The Perfect Weapon" (Mark DiSalle), with Jeffrey Speakman.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)

"Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)

Theatre 1: "The Grifters" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Hard Way" (John Badham), with Michael J. Fox and James Woods.

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)

Theatre 1: "Scenes from a Mall" (Paul Mazursky), with Bette Midler and Woody Allen.

Theatre 2: Through March 14: "Green Card" (†). From March 15: "Guilty by Suspicion" (Irwin Winkler), with Robert De Niro.

Theatre 3: "Mr. & Mrs. Bridge" (†).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)

Theatre 1: "The Doors" (†).

Theatre 2: Through March 14: "L.A. Story" (†). From March 15: "If Looks Could Kill" (William Dear), with Richard Grieco.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)

Through March 14: "Once Around" (Lasse Hallström), with Richard Dreyfuss and Holly Hunter.

From March 15: "True Colors" (Herbert Ross), with John Cusack and James Spader.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)

Theatre 1: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).

Theatre 2: "He Said, She Said" (Ken Kwapis and Marisa Silver), with Kevin Bacon, Elizabeth Perkins, and Sharon Stone.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)

"Hamlet" (†).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)

"Dances with Wolves" (†).

U.A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)

"He Said, She Said" (Ken Kwapis and Marisa Silver), with Kevin Bacon, Elizabeth Perkins, and Sharon Stone.

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 26.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)

Theatre 1: "The Hard Way" (John Badham), with Michael J. Fox and James Woods.

Theatre 2: Through March 14: "King Ralph" (David S. Ward), with John Goodman. From March 15: "The Perfect Weapon" (Mark DiSalle), with Jeffrey Speakman.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)

Theatre 1: "New Jack City" (Mario Van Peebles), with Wesley Snipes.

Theatre 2: "Scenes from a Mall" (Paul Mazursky).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

Theatre 1: Through March 12: "Blood in the Face" (†). From March 13: "Paris Is Burning" (directed by Jennie Livingston).

Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.

Theatre 3: Through March 12: "1900" (1977, Bernardo Bertolucci), with Robert De Niro. From March 13: "Blood in the Face" (†).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)

Theatre 1: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).

Theatre 2: "Awakenings" (†).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)

Through March 14: "Hamlet" (†).

From March 15: "Guilty by Suspicion" (Irwin Winkler), with Robert De Niro.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)

Theatre 1: "The Grifters" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Hard Way" (John Badham).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)

Theatre 1: "Green Card" (†).

Theatre 2: "Misplaced" (Louis Yansen), with Viveca Lindfors.

Theatre 3: "GoodFellas" (†).

Theatre 4: Through March 14: "Shipwrecked" (Nils Gaup). From March 15: "Song of the Exile" (Ann Hui; in Cantonese, with Mandarin and English subtitles).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)

Theatre 1: "Mr. & Mrs. Bridge" (†).

Theatre 2: Through March 14: "King Ralph" (David S. Ward), with John Goodman. From March 15: "If Looks Could Kill" (William Dear), with Richard Grieco.

Theatre 3: "Closet Land" (Radha Bharadwaj), with Madeleine Stowe and Alan Rickman.

Theatre 4: "Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).

Theatre 5: Through March 14: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin. From March 15: "Class Action" (Michael Apted), with Gene Hackman and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio.

Theatre 6: "Awakenings" (†).

Theatre 7: "The Grifters" (†).

Theatre 8: "Once Around" (Lasse Hallström), with Richard Dreyfuss and Holly Hunter.

Theatre 9: "The Hard Way" (John Badham), with Michael J. Fox and James Woods.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)

Theatre 1: "GoodFellas" (†).

Theatre 2: "New Jack City" (Mario Van Peebles), with Wesley Snipes.

Theatre 3: "Reversal of Fortune" (†).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)

"Scenes from a Mall" (Paul Mazursky), with Bette Midler and Woody Allen.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)

Theatre 1: "Closet Land" (Radha Bharadwaj), with Madeleine Stowe and Alan Rickman.

Theatre 2: "Spirit of 76."

Theatre 3: "King Ralph" (David S. Ward), with John Goodman.

Theatre 4: "Mr. & Mrs. Bridge" (†).

Theatre 5: "Green Card" (†).

Theatre 6: "The Hard Way" (John Badham), with Michael J. Fox and James Woods.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)

"The Doors" (†).

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)

"The Godfather Part III" (†).

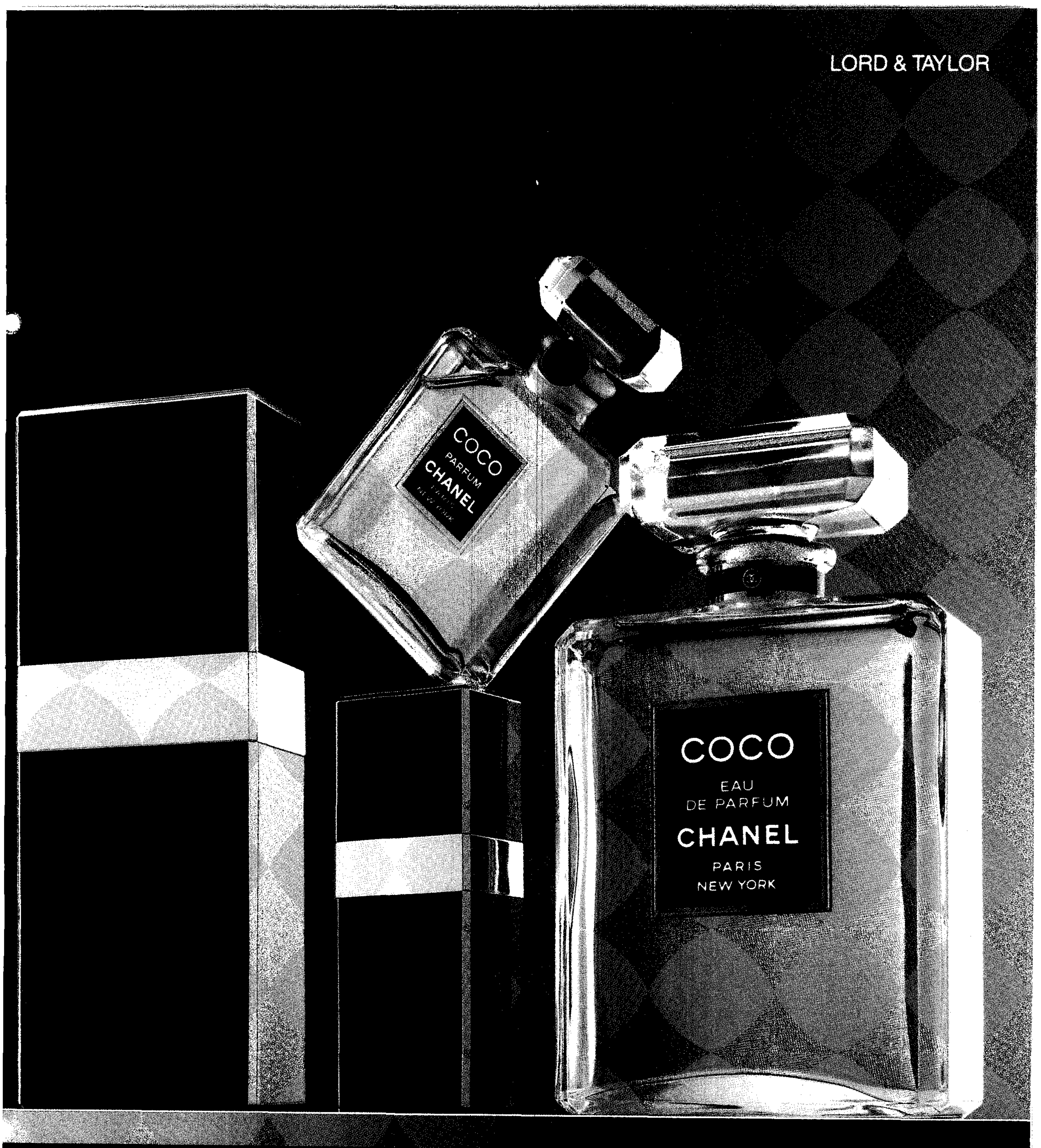
57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

"Heaven and Earth" (Karuki Kadokawa; in Japanese).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)

Theatre 1: "La Femme Nikita" (Luc Besson; in French).

Theatre 2: "Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead" (†).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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Alice" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Closet Land" (Radha Bharadwaj).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Dances with Wolves" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
Through March 14: "Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).
From March 15: "Class Action" (Michael Apted), with Gene Hackman and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "The Nasty Girl" (Michael Verhoeven; in German), with Lena Stolze.
Theatre 2: "Open Doors" (Gianni Amelio; in Italian), with Glan Maria Volonte.
Theatre 3: Through March 16: "Ay, Carmela!" (Carlos Saura; in Spanish), with Carmen Maura. From March 17: "Ju Dou" (Zhang Yi-Mou; in Mandarin).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"The Hard Way" (John Badham), with Michael J. Fox and James Woods.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: Through March 14: "L.A. Story" (†). From March 15: "Guilty by Suspicion" (Irwin Winkler), with Robert De Niro.
Theatre 2: Through March 14: "Scenes from a Mall" (Paul Mazursky), with Bette Midler and Woody Allen. From March 15: "The Perfect Weapon" (Mark DiSalle), with Jeffrey Speakman.
Theatre 3: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Grifters" (†).
Theatre 5: "He Said, She Said" (Ken Kwapis and Marisa Silver), with Kevin Bacon, Elizabeth Perkins, and Sharon Stone.
Theatre 6: "The Doors" (†).

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "King Ralph" (David S. Ward), with John Goodman.
Theatre 2: "Awakenings" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: Through March 14: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin. From March 15: "If Looks Could Kill" (William Dear), with Richard Grieco.
Theatre 2: "New Jack City" (Mario Van Peebles), with Wesley Snipes.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: Through March 14: "Misery" (directed by Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates. From March 15: "If Looks Could Kill" (William Dear), with Richard Grieco.
Theatre 2: "The Grifters" (†).
Theatre 3: Through March 14: "L.A. Story" (†). From March 15: Guilty by Suspicion" (Irwin Winkler), with Robert De Niro.
Theatre 4: Through March 14: (Matinées only) "The NeverEnding Story II The Next Chapter" (George Miller), with Jonathan Brandis; and (evenings only) "Popcorn" (Mark Herrier), with Tony Roberts. From March 15: "Cadence" (Martin Sheen), with Charlie Sheen.
Theatre 5: "GoodFellas" (†).
Theatre 6: "Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
Through March 14: "The Godfather Part III" (†).
From March 15: "The Perfect Weapon" (Mark DiSalle), with Jeffrey Speakman.

Embassy 2, 3 and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: Through March 14: "Shipwrecked" (Nils Gaup). From March 15: "The Godfather Part III" (†).
Theatre 2: "He Said, She Said" (Ken Kwapis and Marisa Silver), with Kevin Bacon, Elizabeth Perkins, and Sharon Stone.
Theatre 3: "Ghost" (Jerry Zucker), with Patrick Swayze, Demi Moore, Whoopi Goldberg, and Tony Goldwyn.

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"The Silence of the Lambs" (†).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "The Hard Way" (John Badham), with Michael J. Fox and James Woods.
Theatre 2: Through March 14: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin. From March 15: "Class Action" (Michael Apted), with Gene Hackman and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio.

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: "New Jack City" (Mario Van Peebles), with Wesley Snipes.
Theatre 2: "New Jack City."

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
March 11: "Sidewalks of London" (1938, directed by Tim Whelan), with Vivien Leigh, Charles Laughton, and Rex Harrison; and "Storm in a Teacup" (1938, Victor Saville), with Leigh, Harrison, Cecil Parker, and Sara Allgood.
March 12-13: "The Foxes of Harrow" (1947, John M. Stahl), with Rex Harrison, Maureen O'Hara, Victor McLaglen, and Richard Haydn; and "The Ghost and Mrs. Muir" (1947, Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with Gene Tierney and Harrison.
March 14-16: "The Reluctant Debutante" (1958, Vincente Minnelli), with Rex Harrison, Kay Kendall, John Saxon, and Sandra Dee; and "Unfaithfully Yours" (1948, Preston Sturges), with Harrison, Linda Darnell, Edgar Kennedy, and Rudy Vallée.
March 17-18: "Major Barbara" (†), and "Blithe Spirit" (1945, David Lean), with Constance Cummings, Rex Harrison, Kay Hammond, and Margaret Rutherford.

CZECHOWSKI

Julie Christie in "McCabe & Mrs. Miller"

March 19-20: "The Citadel" (†); and "Men Are Not Gods" (1937, Walter Reisch), with Miriam Hopkins, Gertrude Lawrence, and Rex Harrison.

Cinema Village, 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
Through March 12: "Tune in Tomorrow . . ." (1990, Jon Amiel), with Keanu Reeves, Barbara Hershey, and Peter Falk; and "Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills" (1989, Paul Bartel), with Ray Sharkey, Robert Beltran, Mary Woronov, and Jacqueline Bisset.
March 13-16: "Sweetie" (1990, Jane Campion); and "Miami Blues" (1990, Charles Armitage), with Alec Baldwin, Fred Ward, and Jennifer Jason Leigh.
March 17-19: "Distant Voices, Still Lives" (†); and "Privates on Parade" (1982, Michael Blackmore), with John Cleese.
From March 20: "Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†); and "The Plot Against Harry" (1969, Michael Roemer).

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through March 12: "Hallelujah!" (1929, King Vidor), with Daniel L. Haynes and Nina Mae McKinney; and "Sanders of the River" (1935, Zoltán Korda), with Paul Robeson.
March 13-14: "Nothing but a Man" (1964, Michael Roemer), with Ivan Dixon, Abbey Lincoln, and Gloria Foster; and "Dutchman" (1967, Anthony Harvey), with Shirley Knight and Al Freeman, Jr.
From March 15: "Robot Carnival" (1990), nine short animated films by Japanese directors.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
March 11: "Testament of Orpheus" (1959, Jean Cocteau; in French); "Blood of a Poet" (1930, Cocteau; in French); and "Orpheus" (1949, Cocteau; in French), with Jean Marais.
March 12: "American Graffiti" (1973, George Lucas), with Richard Dreyfuss and Ronny Howard; and "Summer of '42" (1971, Robert Mulligan), with Jennifer O'Neill and Gary Grimes.
March 13: "The Wrong Man" (1956, Alfred Hitchcock), with Henry Fonda, Vera Miles, and Anthony Quayle; and "Dial M for Murder" (1954, Hitchcock), with Ray Milland, Grace Kelly, Robert Cummings, Anthony Dawson, and John Williams.
March 14: "The Only Game in Town" (1970, George Stevens), with Warren Beatty and Elizabeth Taylor; and "McCabe & Mrs. Miller" (†).
March 15-16: "Last Tango in Paris" (1972, Bernardo Bertolucci; in French and English), with Marlon Brando and Maria Schneider; and "The Men" (1950, Fred Zinnemann), with Teresa Wright, Brando, and Jack Webb.
March 17: "Walkabout" (1971, Nicolas Roeg); and "Picnic at Hanging Rock" (1975, Peter Weir), with Rachel Roberts.
March 18: "Hour of the Wolf" (1968, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Max von Sydow and Liv Ullmann; and "The Passion of Anna" (1970, Bergman; in Swedish), with Ullmann.
March 19: "Red River" (†); and "Shane" (1953, George Stevens), with Alan Ladd, Jean Arthur, Brandon deWilde, Van Heflin, and Jack Palance.
March 20: "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" (1966, Mike Nichols), with Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, George Segal, and Sandy Dennis; and "Butterfield 8" (1960, Daniel Mann), with Taylor, Laurence Harvey, Eddie Fisher, and Dina Merrill.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—March 11 at 2:30: "My Favorite Wife" (1940, directed by Garson Kanin), with Irene Dunne, Cary Grant, and Randolph Scott. . . . ¶ March 11 at 6: "Love Affair" (1939, Leo McCarey), with Dunne, Charles Boyer, and Maria Ouspenskaya. . . . ¶ March 12 at 2:30: "The Third Man" (1949, Carol Reed), with Joseph Cotten, Orson Welles, and Alida Valli. . . . ¶ March 12 at 6: "Memphis Belle" (1944, William Wyler) and "The Battle of San Pietro" (1945, John Huston), both documentaries. . . . ¶ March 14 at 2:30 and 6: "Bambini in Città" (1946, Luigi Comencini; in Italian); and "Shoeshine" (1946, Vittorio De Sica; in Italian), with Rinaldo Smordoni and Franco Interlenghi. . . . ¶ March 14 at 6: A program of American avant-garde films from the forties.

Film Society of Lincoln Center (at MOMA)—The first programs in a seventeen-day international festival of new films by new directors. March 15 at 6: "Halfaouine—Child of the Terraces" (Férid Boughedir, Tunisia and France). . . . ¶ March 15 at 9 and March 16 at 12:15: "L'Amour" (Philippe Faucon, France). . . . ¶ March 16 at 3: "Halfaouine—Child of the Terraces." . . . ¶ March 16 at 6: "Leo Sonnyboy" (Rolf Lyssy, Switzerland). . . . ¶ March 16 at 9: "A Little Stiff" (Caveh Zahedi and Greg Watkins, United States). . . . ¶ March 17 at 3: "Leo Sonnyboy." . . . ¶ March 17 at 6: "A Little Stiff." . . . ¶ March 17 at 9 and March 18 at 6: "Legends" (Ilana Bar-Din, United States). . . . ¶ March 18 at 9 and March 19 at 6: "Fallen from Heaven" (Francisco Lombardi, Peru). . . . ¶ March 19 at 9 and March 20 at 6: "Time of the Servants" (Irene Pavlaskova, Czechoslovakia). (Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. For information, call 877-1800, ext 489.)

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—Programs about contemporary comedians and people who influenced them. Garry Shandling: March 12-16: "The Graduate" (1986, Showtime/Fox), an episode of "It's Garry Shandling's Show"; and "The Woody Allen Special" (1969, CBS). . . . From March 19: "What's Happening to Me?" (1988, Showtime / Fox), an episode of "It's Garry Shandling's Show"; "Coast to Coast Big Mouth" (1965, CBS), an episode of "The Dick Van Dyke Show," with Van Dyke and Mary Tyler Moore; and highlights from shows featuring Steve Allen, Dick Shawn, George Carlin, Richard Pryor, and Albert

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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Brooks. Showings Tuesdays at 12:15 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 12:15. . . . ¶ "On Stage at Carnegie Hall: A Centennial Celebration." March 12-16: "On Location: Carlin at Carnegie" (1983, HBO), with George Carlin; and "Andy Kaufman Plays Carnegie Hall" (1979, Showtime). . . . From March 19: "See It Now: Anatomy of a Symphony Orchestra" (1952, CBS), with Edward R. Murrow. Showings Tuesdays at 2:30 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 2:30. . . . ¶ "A Salute to Monty Python." March 12-16: "At Last the 1948 Show" (1967, Rediffusion), with John Cleese, Graham Chapman, Marty Feldman, and Tim Brooke-Taylor; and "Do Not Adjust Your Set" (1968, Rediffusion, Thames), with Terry Jones, Michael Palin, Eric Idle, David Jason, and Denise Coffey. . . . From March 19: Episodes 1-5 of "Monty Python's Flying Circus." Showings Tuesdays at 12:15, 2:30, and 5:30; Wednesdays through Fridays at 12:15 and 2:30; and Saturdays at 12:15.

Anthology Film Archives, 32-34 Second Ave., at Second St. (477-2714)—March 13 at 7: "A Movie" (1958), "Cosmic Ray" (1961), and "Report" (1965), all directed by Bruce Conner; and "The Flicker" (1966, Tony Conrad). . . . ¶ March 13-16 at 8:30 and 10 and March 17 at 5 and 6:30: "Ten for Two" (1971, Steve Gebhardt). . . . ¶ March 14 at 7: "The Pleasure Garden" (1953), "The Bed" (1968), and "Nuptiae" (1969), all directed by James Broughton. . . . ¶ March 15 at 7: A program of short films by Stan Brakhage. . . . ¶ March 16-17 at 5: "Poem Posters" (1965) and "Johnny Minotaur" (1971), both directed by Charles Henri Ford. . . . ¶ March 16 at 7:30: A program of short films by Piero Heliczer, Saul Levine, Albert Marshall, and Heather McAdams. . . . ¶ March 16 at 9:15: A program of short films by Takahiko Iimura, Karl Kels, and Lewis Klahr. . . . ¶ March 17 at 2: "Full Moon Darkness" (1990, Carl E. Brown). . . . ¶ March 17 at 8 and 10 and March 20 at 10: "Ladies and Gentlemen, The Rolling Stones" (1974, Steve Gebhardt).

Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—March 12 at noon: "The Gold Diggers" (1983, Sally Potter). . . . ¶ March 12 at 2:30: "The Emerging Woman" (1974, Helena Solberg-Ladd) and "A Simple Matter of Justice" (1978, Victoria Hochberg). . . . ¶ March 14 at noon: "Matter of Heart: A Portrait of Carl Jung" (1985, Michael Whitney) and "What Is Gestalt?" (1969). . . . ¶ March 19 at noon: "Losing Ground" (1982, Kathleen Collins). . . . ¶ March 19 at 2:30: "Union Maids" (1975, James Klein, Miles Mogulescu, and Julia Reichert) and "Joyce at 34" (1972, Joyce Chopra).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—March 16 at 2, 3, and 4 and March 17 at 2 and 4: Five different programs of films by Stan Brakhage.

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—Programs of videotapes made by, or starring, Andy Warhol. Showings Tuesdays at 2, 3:30, and 6:30; Wednesdays through Saturdays at noon, 1:30, and 3:30; and Sundays at 1, 2:30, and 4:30.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—March 13 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Sand and Blood" (1988, Jeanne Labrune; in French), with Sami Frey, André Dussollier, Clémentine Célarié, and Patrick Catilifo. . . . ¶ March 20 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Mon Oncle d'Amérique" (1980, Alain Resnais; in French), with Gérard Depardieu, Nicole Garcia, Roger Pierre, and Marie Dubois.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

Alice—Woody Allen's latest picture is an awkward blend of whimsy and moralizing. The title character, played by Mia Farrow, is a pampered Upper East Side lady-who-lunches. She lives in a huge apartment with her handsome husband (William Hurt), her adorable children, and a staff, and she looks terrific. But her life, the movie tells us, is totally empty and false. A Chinatown doctor (Keye Luke) gives her a variety of herbal remedies to knock the yuppie malaise out of her system. One of them makes her invisible; one makes her irresistible to men; and so on. As these fantasy episodes mount up, Alice begins to see how artificial her life is, how far she's strayed from the pure ideals of her Catholic girlhood, how much more love she needs than she has been getting, and what a revolting piece of Wasp slime her husband is. In the end, the heroine seems, incredibly, to have redeemed herself through self-absorption; the movie doesn't benefit from any such miracle. Although there are more jokes here than in any of Allen's last few features, the picture isn't really a comedy; it's a sermon with gags. The large cast also includes Joe Mantegna, Alec Baldwin, Blythe Danner, Judy Davis, Bob Balaban, and Bernadette Peters (who does a sensational brief turn as a cynical muse).—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/31/90.) (Loews Fine Arts.)

Awakenings—This adaptation of Oliver Sacks' account of the awakening of post-encephalitic patients who had been "living statues" for decades is persuasive in its own terms, but it's also a near-perfect example of Hollywoodization. In the book, Sacks, the fabulist of illness, is drawn into his patients' aberrant states—he sees their abnormalities as brilliantly unique forms of consciousness to be charted. In the movie, the director, Penny Marshall, works the audience. She keeps zapping us to feel the humanistic, the obvious; her forte is to make blandness ring true. The movie is all about the doctor (Robin Williams) being a caring individual; Sacks, who's sensitized to prodigious kinds of experience, is turned into an absent-minded professor banging his head. As for Robert De Niro, who's the prize patient—well, when you're playing a silent, somnolent person who wakes up and soon after erupts into madness, you certainly give the impression that you're acting. As the head nurse—a role that's an embarrassment—Julie Kavner still manages to give the best performance. With the frail octogenarian Ruth Nelson as De Niro's mother, and John Heard, Penelope Ann Miller, and Max von Sydow.—P.K. (2/11/91) (Manhattan Twin, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, and Metro Cinema.)

Blood in the Face—A skillfully made documentary about the radical right wing in North America. The movie's directors—Anne Bohlen, Kevin Rafferty, and James Ridgeway—put on display an alarmingly large aggregation of Fascist loonies: members of the Klan, the American Nazi Party, and other, less well-known organizations, all of them dedicated to spreading the gospel of anti-Semitism and white supremacy. What makes these zealots good subjects for a documentary is that they're compulsive talkers, tirelessly eager to expound their elaborate paranoid theories and make converts to the cause. (It passes the time while they wait for Armageddon.) Some really stunning delusional systems are elaborated here; everyone interviewed in this picture seems in need of a complete neurological workup. The film is fascinating, but it's also frustrating in that it doesn't provide much of a context for its menagerie of crackpots. The filmmakers don't try to explain the origins of these reactionary movements or to assess their current strength. The movie's tone is sometimes cautionary, suggesting that these groups constitute a sizable and material danger, and sometimes merely condescending, encouraging us to respond to the sheer ridiculousness of the radical right's ideas. When the film is over, all we can say for sure is that we've seen a compelling freak show.—T.R. (Film Forum.)

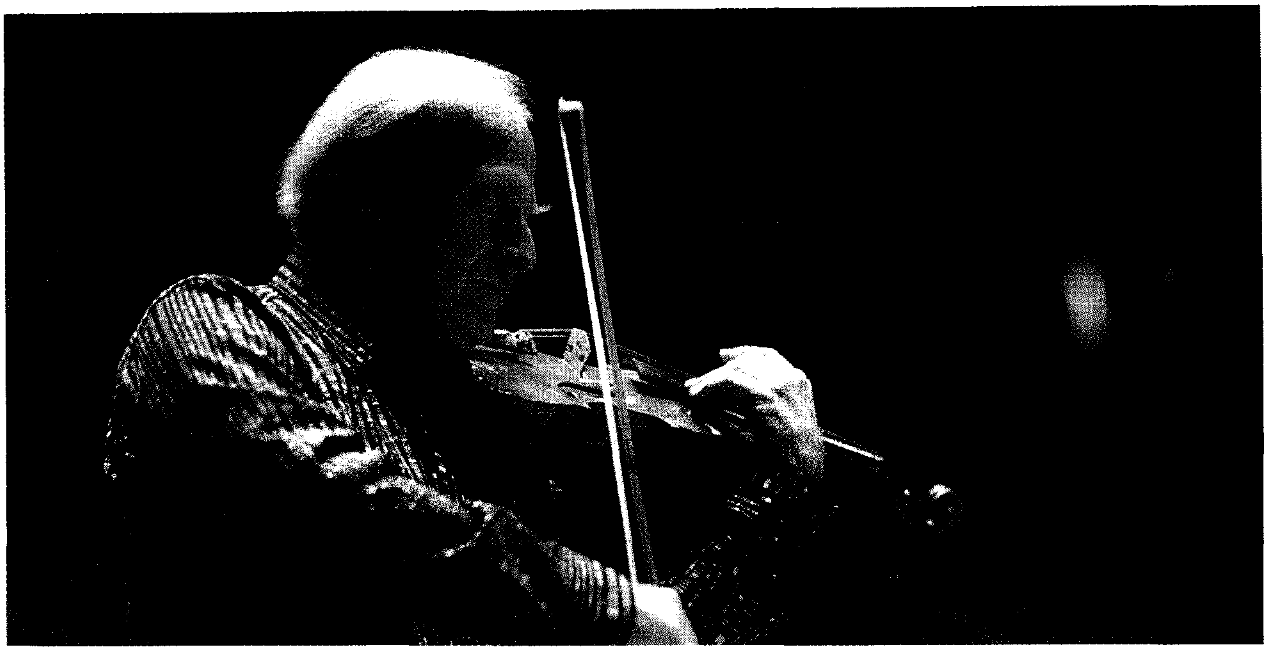
The Citadel (1938)—A. J. Cronin's best-sellers lack literary distinction, and their seriousness shades into oppressive sobriety; still, there's some substance in his high-minded, commonplace approach. You can feel the director, King Vidor, straining to give the theme—doctors' struggles with their consciences—prestige-picture importance, but he holds one's interest. He does especially well in the early scenes, when the hero, Robert Donat, is working among the Welsh miners, and then he slacks off during the passages about the Harley Street phonies. Fortunately, there are actors to watch when the preachiness gets thick; Rex Harrison, Ralph Richardson, Rosalind Russell, and Emlyn Williams all have major roles—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; March 19-20.)

Crimes and Misdemeanors (1989)—Written and directed by Woody Allen, it's a sad, censuring look at an eminent ophthalmologist (Martin Landau) and other crooks in high places who (in Allen's view) have convinced themselves that they can do anything, because they don't think God is watching. Allen is making the film equivalent of a play of ideas, and the ideas have no excitement. He's telling us not just what we already know but what we've already rejected. Woody Allen himself plays a little, grubbing-for-a-living documentary filmmaker who falls in love but can't compete for the woman (Mia Farrow) against a darling of the media, a tall, egomaniacal TV producer played with a wonderfully smug, screwy abandon by Alan Alda. Except for Alda, and Landau (when he's showing nervous impatience), and Jerry Orbach, who plays the ophthalmologist's shady brother, most of the large cast is proficient yet brittle and dull. With Sam Waterston (as a rabbi who's going blind), Anjelica Huston, Claire Bloom, Joanna Gleason, Caroline Aaron, Nora Ephron in a bit, and Daryl Hannah—uncredited, but looking so luscious she almost stops the show. The bland cinematography is by Sven Nykvist.—P.K. (10/30/89) (Cinema Village; starting March 20.)

Dances with Wolves—Set during the Civil War, this big Indians-versus-Cavalry epic is like a New Age social-studies lesson. Kevin Costner, who directed and is the star, has an untroubled face and laid-back diction. As Lieutenant Dunbar, a Union officer, he sees that the Sioux have a superior culture and he changes sides. This is a nature-boy movie, a kid's daydream of being an Indian. When Dunbar has become a Sioux named Dances with Wolves, he writes in his journal that he knows for the first time who he really is. Costner has feathers in his hair and feathers in his head. He and his friend Michael Blake (who worked up the material with him in mind and then wrote the novel and the screenplay) are trying to show the last years of the Sioux as an independent nation from the Sioux point of view, and it's probably that sympathy for the Indians that the audience responds to. But Costner is a moviemaking novice: instead of helping us understand the Sioux, he simply makes the Sioux like genial versions of us. This three-hour Western weeper, with its sluggish action and poorly shaped scenes, was made by a bland megalomaniac. (The Indians should have named him Plays with Camera.) Shot in South Dakota; the wide-screen cinematography, by Dean Semier, is spacious and open at times, and there are fine images of buffalo pounding by. With Mary McDonnell, Maury Chaykin, Robert Pastorelli, Graham Greene as Kicking Bird, and Rodney A. Grant as Wind in His Hair.—P.K. (12/17/90) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews Tower East, and Loews Paramount.)

Distant Voices, Still Lives (1989)—Terence Davies' film, which has won awards at several international festivals, is airless, lugubrious, and overcomposed. It's an autobiographical movie, set in Liverpool in the forties and early fifties, that shows scenes from the life of a working-class family. In essence, it's kitchen-sink drama: Dad's a brute, Mom's a stoic sufferer, the kids rebel in pathetic, stunted ways—everybody's trapped, dead in the water. What's original—and creepy—about Davies' treatment of this familiar material is his relentless aestheticizing of it. He jumbles the chronology, uses a ton of old popular songs (à la Dennis Potter), and even messes with the color process. Davies uses all the art-film techniques at his command to kill his family, embalm them, and rearrange their bodies in a series of lifeless, pristine tableaux. With Freda Dowie, Pete Postlethwaite, Angela Walsh, Lorraine Ashbourne, and Dean Williams.—T.R. (9/4/89) (Cinema Village; March 17-19.)

The Doors—Oliver Stone's film about the sixties



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rock group focusses on Jim Morrison, its lead singer and main songwriter, who died in 1971, at the age of twenty-seven. Morrison (played by Val Kilmer) presented himself as a combination of shaman and *poète maudit*, and he was a star in life and a legend in death because he made the physical, intellectual, and spiritual excesses of the counterculture sexy. The movie is pure exploitation—an extended, self-important freakout. Stone gobbles up Morrison and the sixties and rock and roll as if they were drugs; he seems less interested in interpreting the Vietnam era than in simply appropriating as much of its unruly, orgiastic energy as he can. He reduces the richly contradictory experience of that period to the myth of Morrison, and, in the process, reduces Morrison and the Doors as well: the movie restricts the viewer's freedom to imagine the sixties culture as anything but a movement with a single voice, or to imagine the Doors as anything but a metaphor. (Kilmer is physically convincing as Morrison, but his performance can be only an impersonation: what the script—by Stone and J. Randal Johnson—gives him to play is the icon, not the man.) For a while, the obviousness and flat-out vulgarity are sort of entertaining, and it might be possible to enjoy the movie as a camp classic if you could ignore the mean-spiritedness that keeps breaking through—the fundamental hostility Stone seems to feel toward his subjects. He wants to turn the audience (and himself) on, but the movie's bad faith and tabloidlike sensibility leave us exhausted and depressed: we feel like voyeurs of our own memories. Also with Meg Ryan, Kathleen Quinlan, and Michael Wincott; the other Doors are played by Kyle MacLachlan, Frank Whaley, and Kevin Dillon.—T.R. (3/11/91) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Gemini, Ziegfeld, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

THE GODFATHER PART III—Lightning didn't strike three times. It's a big, ambitious project, and it looks like the first two "Godfather" movies, but the internal force has vanished, and the quality of feeling—what gave the films their lyricism and made the public bond with them—is gone. In the first two pictures the director, Francis Ford Coppola, took opportunistic, sensationalist material and turned it into drama. Now he doesn't transform the sensationalist material (the Corleones' involvement in Vatican swindles); he just presents it, with an aura of solemnity. With Al Pacino as the morose godfather, Andy Garcia as his successor, and Diane Keaton, Talia Shire, Eli Wallach, Joe Mantegna, Donal Donnelly, Raf Vallone, Bridget Fonda, Sofia Coppola, George Hamilton, Franc D'Ambrosio, and Helmut Berger. Written by the director and Mario Puzo.—P.K. (1/14/91) (Loews 19th Street East 6, and Loews Festival. . . . ¶ Embassy 1; through March 14. . . . ¶ Embassy; starting March 15.)

GOODFELLAS—The director, Martin Scorsese, gives you a lift. He loves the Brooklyn organized-crime milieu, because it's where distortion, hyperbole, and exuberance all commingle. The movie is about being cock of the walk, with banners flying and crowds cheering. Based on Nicholas Pileggi's nonfiction book "Wiseguy," it's a triumphant piece of filmmaking—journalism and sociology presented with the brio of drama. But the three major hoods, played by Ray Liotta, Robert De Niro, and Joe Pesci, don't have a strong enough presence, and the movie lacks the juice and richness that come with major performances. (It's like the Howard Hawks "Scarface" without Scarface.) What you respond to is Scorsese's bravura; the filmmaking process becomes the subject of the movie. Watching it is like getting strung out on pure sensation. Paul Sorvino as Paulie and Lorraine Bracco as Karen both come through, and other performers in minor roles give the movie a frenzied, funny texture. The screenplay is by Pileggi and Scorsese; the cinematography is by Michael Ballhaus; the editing is by Thelma Schoonmaker.—P.K. (9/24/90) (Eastside Cinema, Quad Cinema, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Criterion Center.)

GREEN CARD—A limp, dispirited romantic comedy, written and directed by Peter Weir. A rather prissy horticulturist (Andie MacDowell) agrees to an in-name-only marriage to a Frenchman (Gérard Depardieu); he needs a green card to stay in New York, and she needs to show that she's married in order to get past the stuffy co-op board of the building in which she wants to buy an apartment. They meet (for the first time) at City Hall, do the deed, and separate, until several months later, when they're forced to pretend that their union is real—that they aren't strangers but devoted partners who know every little thing about each other. This is a serviceable premise for a screwball comedy, but the screwball is apparently not one of Weir's best pitches: the movie is as flat and lifeless as a hanging curve. Depardieu—as shaggy and hefty as ever—is a skillful comedian, and he looks as if he's having a great time. Not even his vivid presence is enough to rescue this wan little picture. Also with Bebe Neuwirth and Gregg Edelman.—T.R. (Murray Hill Cinemas, Quad Cinema, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Cinema II; through March 14.)

THE GRIFTERS—This adaptation of one of the punchier pulp novels by Jim Thompson retains Thompson's hardboiled pitilessness. It's about three scam artists: tough, seductive Lilly (Anjelica Huston); her son, Roy (John Cusack), who won't have anything to do with her; and his bubbly bedmate, Myra (Annette Bening), a sex fantasy come to luscious life. These chisellers never got a break and don't give anybody else a break. The director, Stephen Frears, and the scriptwriter, Donald E. Westlake, are smart enough not to attempt to make a big thing out of this L.A. film noir. They keep it snappy, and heighten the sexual electricity. And they smack us with discord; we're watching a form of cabaret. Huston is astounding; you can see why the son is getting even with her by throwing his life away, and Bening's two-faced little-girl quality is just what film noir thrives on. (This is a picture with two competing femmes fatales.) It's thin stuff, but it's pretty terrific. (It even has great opening titles.) With Pat Hingle giving the performance of his life.—P.K. (11/19/90) (Baronet, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

HAMLET—Franco Zeffirelli gives Shakespeare's tragedy the ripping-yarns treatment: a dashing star (Mel Gibson); lavish sets and costumes; a generous amount of swordplay and leaping about; and just enough text to enable the audience to follow the story. Zeffirelli and his co-screenwriter, Christopher De Vore, have cut the play to an acceptable prestige-picture running time of two hours and fifteen minutes; you get the feeling that they would have eliminated Hamlet's tortured, action-retarding soliloquies if they could have done so without losing all those famous lines. The movie isn't exactly dull, but it doesn't feel like "Hamlet," either. The play's alternating rhythms of action and reflection have been flattened to a single tempo, brisk but monotonous. Gibson's performance is competent and enjoyable. He isn't interesting, though, and that's probably not entirely his fault—the intellectual vacuity of the production leaves him stranded. Among the all-star supporting cast, Ian Holm (as Polonius) and Paul Scofield (as the ghost of Hamlet's father) do the best work. Also with Glenn Close (as Gertrude) and Helena Bonham-Carter (as Ophelia). Cinematography by David Watkin.—T.R. (Murray Hill Cinemas, and 68th St. Playhouse. . . . ¶ 8th St. Playhouse; through March 14.)

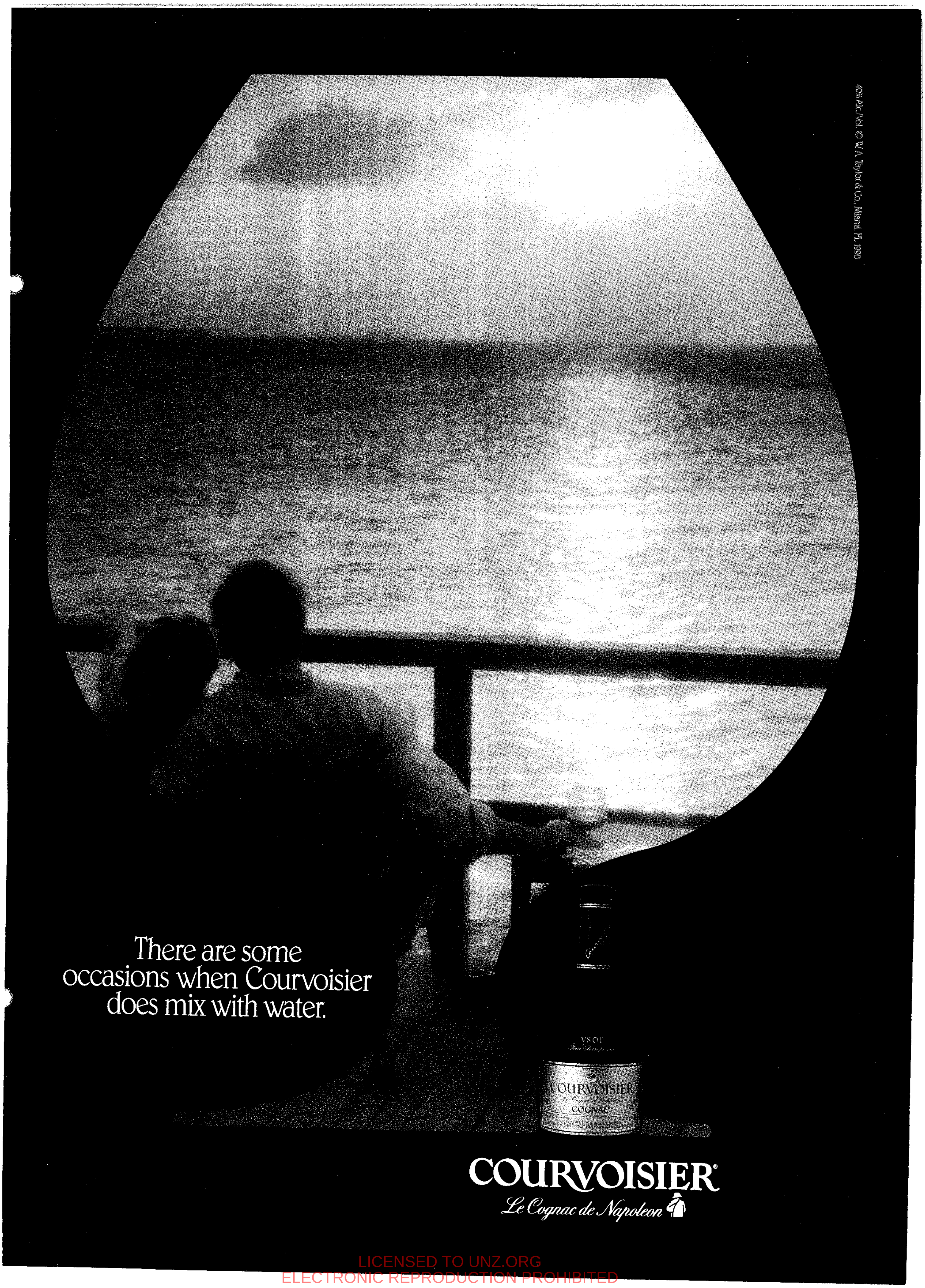
At the Biograph Cinema,
Margaret Rutherford in "Blithe Spirit"

L.A. STORY—Steve Martin wrote and stars in this romantic comedy—a take on "Annie Hall" that turns it inside out. What Martin loves about L.A. is what Woody Allen rejected it for: its pleasure-loving, materialistic irresponsibleness. For Martin, who grew up in Southern California, superficiality is the norm. This movie is totally inconsequential, and he accepts that—it doesn't bother him. As a clowning TV weatherman, Martin is split between his wonder-struck obsession with a British journalist, played by Victoria Tennant, and the carefree high of sex without love, represented by a bouncy nymph played (wonderfully) by Sarah Jessica Parker. The jokes spin by as if choreographed by summer breezes. If some of them aren't quite fresh, the movie is such a silly, light-headed joyride that you don't really mind. With a batch of sharp performers: Rick Moranis (uncredited), Marilu Henner as a tough dame with a cold stare, Susan Forristal as Martin's pal, M. C. Shan as a waiter-rapper, and Richard E. Grant, Kevin Pollak, and Patrick Stewart, among others. Artfully directed by the English TV ace Mick Jackson; with cinematography by Andrew Dunn, editing by Richard A. Harris, and a funny, lilting score by Peter Melnick.—P.K. (2/11/91) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center; through March 14.)

MAJOR BARBARA (1941)—Terrible, but bearable; there's a fascination to its clunkiness. Shaw had allowed "Pygmalion" to be cut and adapted for the screen, and it was a great success, but he got stubborn on this one and hung on to his dialogue; Gabriel Pascal, who had produced "Pygmalion," had also been spoiled by its success and decided to direct this time. Their failings were compounded: the actors posture and talk, and the movie goes on and on until whatever it's meant to be about no longer seems to matter. It's too cheerful to be really boring, however. The cast includes Rex Harrison (in a role based on Gilbert Murray), Wendy Hiller, Robert Morley, Sybil Thorndike, Robert Newton, Emlyn Williams, Deborah Kerr, and Stanley Holloway. William Walton did the score, Cecil Beaton the costumes.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; March 17-18.)

MCCABE & MRS. MILLER (1971)—A beautiful pipe dream of a movie: Robert Altman's fleeting vision of what frontier life might have been, with Warren Beatty as a cocky small-time gambler and Julie Christie as an ambitious madam in the turn-of-the-century Northwest. Delicate, richly textured, and unusually understated, this modern classic is not like any other film. Altman builds a Western town as one might build a castle in the air—and it's inhabited. His stock company of actors turn up quietly in the new location, as if they were part of a floating crap game, and he creates an atmosphere of living interrelationships. With Keith Carradine, Shelley Duvall, René Auberjonois, John Schuck, Bert Remsen, Michael Murphy, Anthony Holland, Corey Fischer, Hugh Millais, Manfred Schulz, Jack Riley, Robert Fortier, and, in the one sequence that doesn't really work, William Devane as a blowhard lawyer. The script, by Altman and Brian McKay, is based on the novel "McCabe," by Edmund Naughton; the cinematography is by Vilmos Zsigmond.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; March 14.)

MR. & MRS. BRIDGE—An adaptation, by the Merchant-Ivory team (the director James Ivory, the producer Ismail Merchant, and the writer Ruth Prawer Jhabvala), of Evan S. Connell's novels about the painfully respectable Bridge family of Kansas City. Walter and India Bridge (Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward) are pure exemplars of the middle: they're middle-aged and middle-class; they live in a medium-sized city in virtually the dead center of the United States; and they are neither truly happy nor consciously unhappy. They're monsters of moderation. At the beginning of the film, Ivory seems eerily in tune with the novels' distinctive sensibility. The picture gets by, initially, on its strange mood of chilling coziness, and when we tire of that—and we do, because it doesn't change or develop—the actors keep us engaged a while longer. Newman doesn't try to soften the character, or to distance himself from it with exaggerated effects, and his scrupulousness pays off. The character seems not more likable but more human than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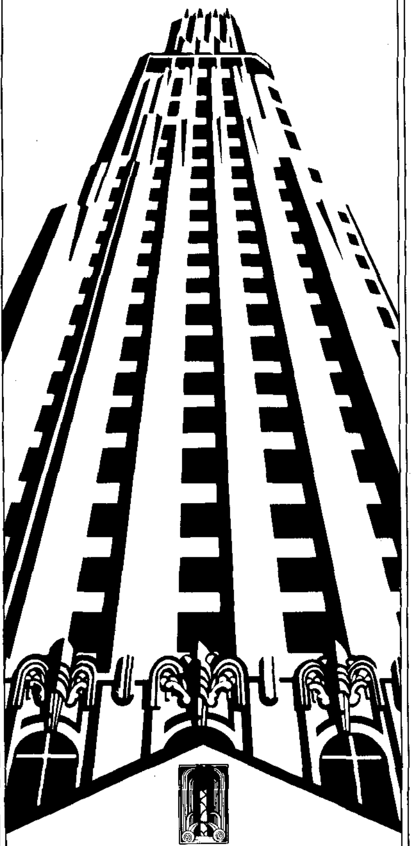

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it does in the novels; by very simple means, Newman enables us to understand Mr. Bridge's insensitivity and emotional ineptitude. And Woodward, too, gives a delicate, subtle performance; she embodies a foolish woman vividly and unpatronizingly. But the screenplay retains the static quality of the books' construction, so at a certain point the scenes begin to feel arbitrary. And Ivory's perspective on the material seems to become clouded by a storm of minutiae—a surfeit of period detail. (The action takes place in the late thirties and early forties.) In the end, the Bridges aren't large enough either to move us or to terrify us; they're the Ambersons without the magnificence. Also with Blythe Danner, Kyra Sedgwick, Robert Sean Leonard, Margaret Welsh, and Simon Callow.—T.R. (12/3/90) (Village East Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Chelsea Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

REVERSAL OF FORTUNE—An entertainingly trashy sick-joke docudrama about how Claus von Bülow's conviction for trying to kill his superrich wife was overturned on appeal through the brainpower of the Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz and his team of students and former students. Jeremy Irons' von Bülow is a pop conception of a decadent aristocrat, and the crowd-pleasing satirical subtext is that the heirs and heiresses of the great fortunes are useless, bored, unloving, and unloved.The fun here is that Irons' performance is a masterly conceit. His von Bülow is a depraved cuckoo; he simply can't resist playing ghoulish comedian and making Dershowitz (Ron Silver) his stooge. The script, by Nicholas Kazan, is skillfully constructed, but it's based on Dershowitz's book about the case, and he's the protagonist—the crusading lawyer searching for evidence of innocence. Silver's Dershowitz seems to be overdosing on proud sentimental Jewishness. (That this is a positive stereotype makes it no less a stereotype.) The direction, by Barbet Schroeder, is assured but often impersonal and emptily energetic. With Glenn Close (very effective as Sunny Von Bülow, the comatose narrator), Christine Baranski as Andrea Reynolds, Julie Hagerty (uncredited) as Alexandra Isles, and Stephen Mailer, Annabella Sciorra, Uta Hagen, and Fisher Stevens. Music by Mark Isham.—P.K. (11/19/90) (23rd St. West Triplex.)

ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD—The heroes of Tom Stoppard's 1967 play are a pair of marginal, forgettable characters from "Hamlet"—the school friends of the Prince who have been summoned by Claudius to help the King find out why his stepson is in such a bad mood. The conceit of the play is that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, those bozos in doublet and hose, have some sort of life independent of their brief appearances on the stage of a great tragedy. Stoppard's manner is that of an antic modernist, a meta-absurdist; his Rosencrantz and Guildenstern both evoke and send up the Beckett-influenced theatrical fashions of the late sixties. The title characters' exchanges are all undergraduate-philosophy jokes and puns of the elaborate/inane variety favored by English cryptic crosswords. The shocking thing about this movie version, which was directed by the playwright, is that the material doesn't seem very funny anymore. Stoppard has "opened out" the play in all the conventional wrong-headed ways, and he doesn't seem to have a clue about where to point the camera. As a movie director, he doesn't know a hawk from a handsaw. He even manages to sabotage the Ping-Pong rhythms of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's comic set pieces: we rarely have the sense that the actors, Tim Roth and Gary Oldman, are playing off each other. (Oldman, who sometimes suggests Stan Laurel, succeeds in getting a few laughs anyway.) The movie is so lethargic and gloomy-looking that you'd think Stoppard didn't understand his own play; what he really doesn't understand is the movies. Also with Richard Dreyfuss and Ian Richardson.—T.R. (2/25/91) (Angelika Film Center, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS—Adapted from a novel by Thomas Harris, Jonathan Demme's thriller is artful pulp—tabloid material treated with intelligence and care and a weird kind of sensitivity. The heroine, Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster), is an earnest F.B.I. trainee who is selected to interview Dr. Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins), a psychiatrist who is also a famous mass murderer; her superiors hope that Lecter's twisted expertise can somehow be used to help them catch a serial killer known as Buffalo Bill, who flays his victims. In the course of the movie, these conversations between the trainee and the psychiatrist turn into edgy, complex transactions in which she reveals pieces of her inner life in return for his hints on how to find the killer. Hopkins plays the monster with a fine, cold relish; he gives the character a mesmeric animal stillness, the terrifying opacity of a cobra. And the impact of his performance is heightened by its contrast with everything surrounding it: the scrupulous realism of Demme's style, the mundane details of police procedure, and, in particular, the emotional transparence of the heroine. Demme keeps our attention on Starling and her shifting reactions to the world, and his most striking achievement in this picture is his direction of Jodie Foster. The trainee draws near Buffalo Bill with the hovering, darting motion of a moth around a flame, and Foster, with amazing delicacy, shows us the constant tension

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In 1948, two of Hollywood's biggest stars played vicious antiheroes in films that are funny, harrowing, and exciting: Humphrey Bogart in John Huston's "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre," and, surprisingly, John Wayne in Howard Hawks' "Red River." Hawks sent three thousand head of cattle thundering through swirling Western landscapes to film this story of a trailblazing drive from Texas to Abilene. "Red River" (playing March 19 at Theatre 80 St. Marks) is one rambunctious and elating epic. Its catastrophes range from a tense face-off and shoot-out with hostile Mexicans to a terrifying stampede. At the center is Wayne's range baron, Tom Dunson, who conquers the wilderness with a maniacal push that nearly causes him to lose everything else in his life.

In the prologue, Fen (Colleen Gray), a dauntless, passionate pioneer woman, begs Dunson to take her when he splits off from a wagon train. In one scene, one speech, and two kisses, Gray creates a character no man in his right mind would leave behind. But, tragically, Dunson does. Whenever she got the chance, Gray was an outstanding actress—she made difficult parts in 1947's "Kiss of Death" and "Nightmare Alley" look easy. As Fen, her robust womanliness anchors Hawks' sprawling saga. (He gave her fifth billing for one scene.) With a throb in her voice and a tender urgency to her touch, she wraps sexual, familial, and romantic love in homespun. You can see why her death haunts Dunson the rest of his life.

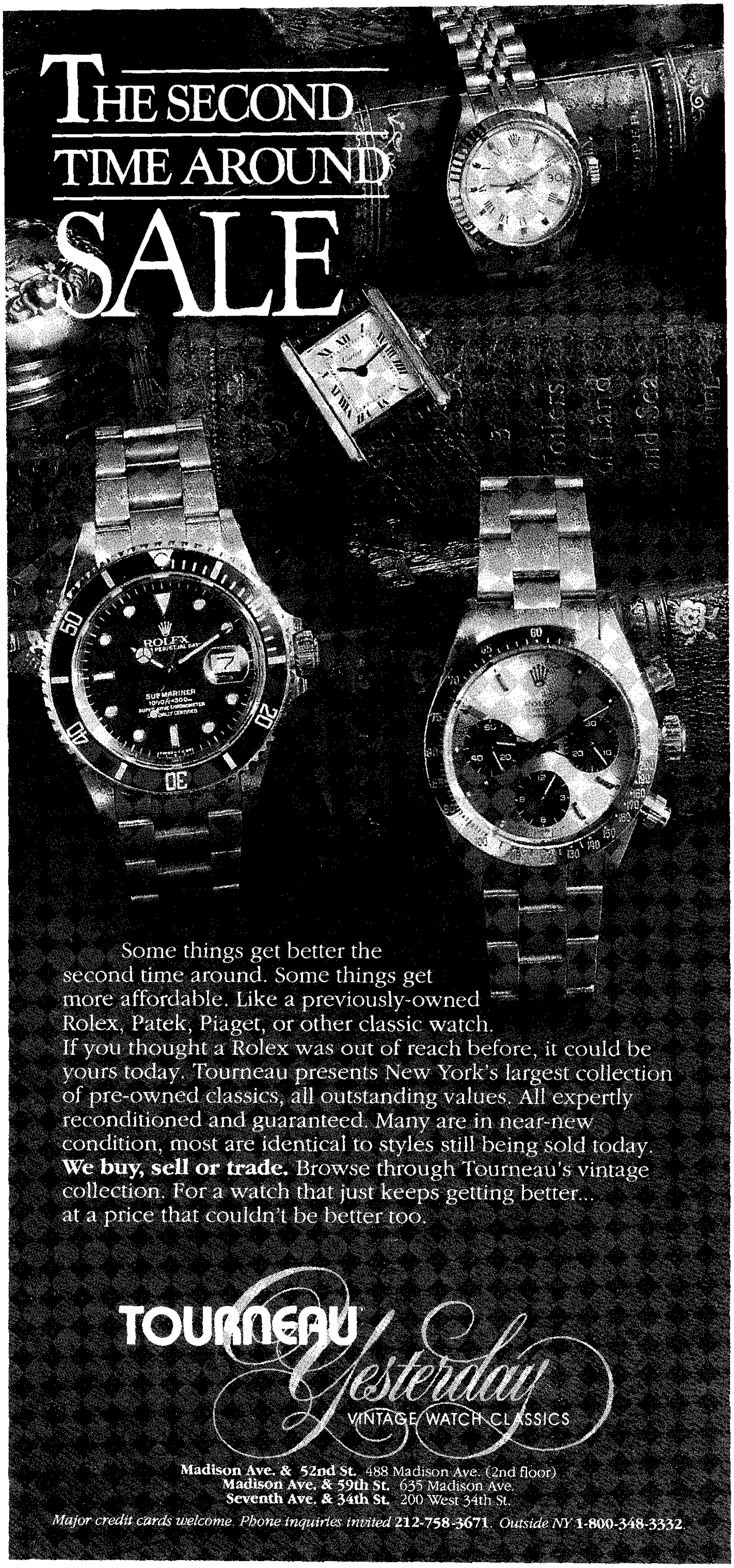
Dunson splits what's left of his affections between his loyal, crusty sidekick, Nadine Groot (Walter Brennan), and his ward, Matthew Garth (the stage-trained Montgomery Clift in his first movie role—though "The Search" premièred earlier). As Garth, who ends up playing Mr. Christian to Dunson's Captain Bligh, Clift is a soft-shoe gunfighter—quiet and suave, quick and alert. As Dunson, Wayne is mulishly magnetic. He pushes his character past the point of breakdown. Not even in John Ford's "The Searchers" did Wayne pull off this sagebrush-psychopath act better than he does in "Red River."

between the character's emotions and her actions—the omnipresent self-consciousness of inexperience. The suspense of this manhunt isn't of the straight-ahead kind we're used to; it's reflective, oscillating between approach and avoidance—it has an unnerving intimacy. Also with Scott Glenn, Ted Levine (as Buffalo Bill), Anthony Heald, and Brooke Smith. The screenplay, which is extremely faithful to the novel, is by Ted Tally. —T.R. (2/25/91) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Waverly, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Loews Astor Plaza.)

Sleeping with the Enemy—Julia Roberts, as a frightened young wife who fakes her death and changes her identity to escape her rich husband (Patrick Bergin), a psychopathic perfectionist. Roberts is an incredible object—you can at least see why a perfectionist would want to hang on to her. But she's a blank goddess here, and the settings—Cape Cod and Cedar Falls, Iowa (both shot in North and South Carolina)—are uninspiring. The director, Joseph Ruben, does a smooth job, with snappy editing every time there's a cut to the enraged husband on the wife's trail. There are no surprise twists, though; the picture is a glossy combination of secondhand, showing-off-Julia scenes from "Pretty Woman" and secondhand scares from "The Stepfather." Ronald Bass's script, out of a novel by Nancy Price, is one letdown after another. With Kevin Anderson, Elizabeth Lawrence, and Nancy Fish. The score, by Jerry Goldsmith, keeps plugging away at ominousness.—P.K. (2/11/91) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 34th St. East, Gotham Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ 62nd & Broadway; through March 14.)

The Vanishing—George Sluizer's film has a simple, powerful thriller hook: a young Dutch woman, Saskia (the radiant Johanna Ter Steege), vacationing in the South of France with her boyfriend, Rex (Gene Bervoets), walks into a highway rest stop to buy soda and beer and never comes back. Rex's search for Saskia, which takes place over several years, produces suspense of an unusually melancholy kind. This fiendishly intelligent little movie is adapted from a novel called "The Golden Egg," by the Dutch writer Tim Krabbé (who collaborated with Sluizer on the adaptation), and its form is essentially literary. It's a sophisticated example of the sort of hermetic intellectual mysteries that Borges is famous for; the fates of Saskia and Rex are worked out with an almost geometric precision. But the movie's rigor isn't alienating, and its symmetries are evocative rather than merely clever. The film is about ordinary lives interrupted, hijacked out of time, and Sluizer, with documentary-style attentiveness to detail, does justice to the varied beauty of ordinariness. The narrative is constructed with flawless elegance, but the movie is far less self-contained than it seems; traces of deep feeling keep escaping from the artifice, like puffs of breath into cold, thin air. Not many thrillers have the sort of suggestiveness this picture has. It's a small classic. Bernard-Pierre Donnadieu gives a chilling performance as the perverse, enigmatic villain. In Dutch and French.—T.R. (1/28/91) (Cinema 12.)

Vincent & Theo—The director, Robert Altman, and the screenwriter, Julian Mitchell, give us an interpretation of the bond that helps to keep Vincent alive while it tears Theo apart. Vincent is obsessive about his painting; Theo is obsessive about Vincent and about his own inability to sell Vincent's work and help him—he can give him only a pittance. This double Passion-play movie is very different from other Altman movies (even allowing for how different they are from each other). The theme—the bitter entanglement of art and commerce—is Altman's lifelong theme, and, staying with it strictly in terms of the van Gogh brothers, he's able to release his own feelings about how an artist's frustrations lead him to acts of self-destructive fury—cutting off his ear to spite his face. It's a movie about two sensualists made by a sensualist, who understands that their bond of love of art is also a bond of shared rage at the world of commerce. This daring film works on its own relentless, celebratory terms. With Tim Roth, whose acting is a form of kinetic discharge, as Vincent and Paul Rhys as Theo.—P.K. (11/19/90) (Gramercy, and Sutton; through March 14, evenings only.)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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

A FRIEND upstate writes:

I grew up in Rochester, so I should probably know what an ice storm is, but what has just happened here is brand-new in my experience. On the night of March 3rd, a Sunday, some sort of strange, gentle, superchilled rain came down over a large part of western New York. It coated every power line with a perfect cylinder of ice nearly an inch thick, from which ideally spaced icicles, like the tines on a soil rake, descended, all exactly the same length. The freeze held through early Tuesday. On Monday, if you looked out any window for a few minutes you were certain to see, against a background of huge, glittering Ace combs, the bough of a tree come crashing down. There was no wind, nor had there been any the first night. It seemed more a demonstration of the patient principles of candlemaking than a storm. At a distance, the ice effects were white, but when you drew close enough to a tree to be surrounded by the continual worry-bead crackling of its fretwork, and stood there, ready to duck at any moment, you saw that it had become incorporated into a clear and disturbingly clinical arrangement of pristine pipettes and test tubes, each holding a once-natural element of the organism—a bud, a twig, one of those perky citizens you had been counting on to function as usual in a few months—in an elaborate cryopharmaceutical experiment.

I drove down the streets today (Tuesday) feeling at times that it was all very familiar, that Ansel Adams calendars had prepared me for this, but then jumping out again and again from the arty, grainy black-and-white photography that slowly moved past was a sudden apricot-colored splash of discomfort where a bough had torn itself free or a trunk had split in half. On the streets I've seen, half of the good big trees are ravaged. The younger ones, planted about twenty years ago to replace all the elms, are especially painful broken sights. Conifers did somewhat better than deciduous trees. The tall weeping spruce next to our house weeps more than usual but has lost no limbs. Stuck high up in it before the storm was a plastic dragon kite, which we had repeatedly tried and failed to extricate; the morning after the storm, it lay in two pieces on the grass. My wife said, "Well, at least something good has come out of this." I said yes, it was like bombing all of Iraq to get rid of Saddam Hussein. She reminded me of Frost's poem about whether the world will end in fire or in ice. And if we hadn't just flown more than a hundred thousand sorties over a distant place I would give in more to grief about all these trees, but in the face of that devastation this sort of rare and unmalicious natural catastrophe, in which nobody dies (not so far, anyway), and some leftovers spoil in some refrigerators, and people go out on tentative camera expeditions to pass the time until the cable TV comes on again, makes me think that we over here have got off very easily. We deserve at least this much ice after that much fire. Many of the trees will grow back, after all, as from a bad pruning. As they thaw now, the water is hearteningly visible, hurrying along the bark underneath the ice layer like blood.

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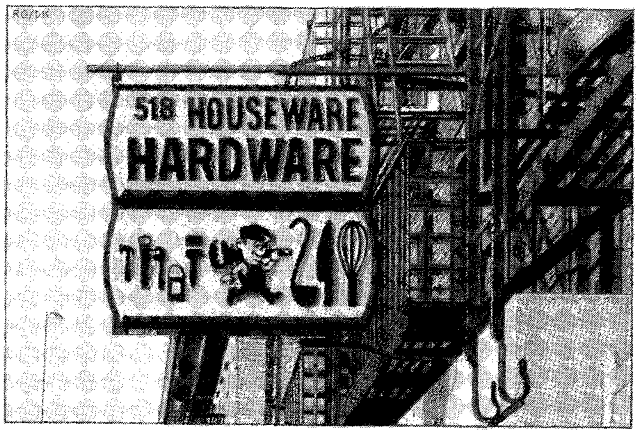
AND a balletgoer we know writes:

Margot Fonteyn, the British prima ballerina, retired from the stage years ago, but the recent news of her death, at the age of seventy-one, hit her American fans hard anyway. Those I ran into would start to make detached observations about her art and then break off and blurt out something like "What can you really say? I just loved her." Ballerinas tend to be cherished, even idolized—as goddesses, angels, muses, incarnations of the supernatural—but they are rarely the objects of such unguarded feeling as Fonteyn's fans had for Fonteyn.

During her career as a professional dancer, which spanned nearly half a century, she helped to make the Royal Ballet one of the world's leading classical companies. She also served as the principal inspiration for the choreographic genius of Frederick Ashton. She became recognized as a supreme performer of the title role in "The Sleeping Beauty"—one of the greatest ballets ever made—and with Rudolf Nureyev she took part in the most charismatic ballet partnership of modern times. As ballerinas



go, Margot Fonteyn was the biggest international star since Anna Pavlova (whom Fonteyn called “the woman and artist I hold above all others”), and, like Pavlova, she specialized in the impersonation of non-human creatures. But there was nothing otherworldly about Fonteyn’s onstage persona. Her flawless classical reserve was continually warmed by suggestions of character in both the theatrical and the moral senses of the word. To the British, who made her a Dame of the Order of the British Empire, she represented the summit of mankind: royalty. To Americans, who made her an unofficial queen, she represented divine normality: the dame there is nothing like. To ballet lovers on both sides of the Atlantic, she represented youth. When you ask Fonteyn admirers to tell you the most important stage moment of her repertory, they will invariably cite her entrance in Act I of “The Sleeping Beauty”: the sixteen-year-old Princess Aurora running, flushed with anticipation and delight, into the court for her birthday party. “And she never looked like a ballerina!” they will say. This illusion—the Fonteyn habit of making a fairy-tale princess, a water nymph, or a firebird seem to be a member of the same species as you or I—may have been her finest magic trick.

How did she do it? For one thing, she was a dancing actress without parallel. In Petipa’s ballets, where formalities can suffocate a dancer’s initiative, she was persuasively spontaneous. In Ashton’s, where love affairs are calibrated in degrees of understatement, her passions were impeccably appropriate. In Kenneth MacMillan’s, her Roman stillnesses could break your heart. She seemed instinctively to hear the drama of a musical line and to replay it in her body, which was perfectly proportioned for ballet. There is no photograph I know of in which the relationship between Fonteyn’s head and shoulders, shoulders and waist, waist and knee is ugly—not even the Gordon Anthony portraits of the twenty-year-old Fonteyn in the 1939 Sadler’s Wells production of “The Sleeping Beauty,” in which her hands claw the air, her turnout is vague, and her points look like carpet slippers.

Fonteyn was the first to acknowledge her weaknesses as a classical dancer—soft feet, a low jump, unruly fouettés. Yet in her undaunted efforts to overcome them she conveyed the impression of drama and psychological depth. (In a proper Fonteyn biography, an entire chapter would have to be devoted to her cultivation of her hands.) Schooled in a style that rewarded exactitude and humility, she fought to keep her arguments with her own body invisible to her audience. The result was that her internal struggles with technique lent her dancing a curious tension, a flavor, that virtuosos who do not need to fight such fights frequently lack.

Fonteyn wrote more books than almost any other ballerina, and she wrote them herself. Yet her books give only flashes of her gift for imaginative connections, which poured from her onstage. Here we saw a tact that was not a wall against the expression of truth but a window for it to fly through. In performance, she always seemed to be looking outside herself, toward aspects of her character’s world, and so, although you could spend an evening admiring such personal qualities of Fonteyn as the way her knee so gracefully disappeared into the line of her arabesque, she did not encourage that sort of regard. She kept directing the viewer’s eyes *somewhere*. She was a great artist but also a modest one, and her modesty was, for most of us, irresistible.

In her book “The Magic of Dance” Fonteyn subjects both her own modesty and the grandeur that is its opposite to a gentle spoof through a comparison of herself with Isadora Duncan. Duncan’s genius was to convey the illusion of breaking through the fourth wall of the proscenium—the wall that Fonteyn worked so hard to maintain. Duncan would throw her gaze across the footlights and up into the reaches of the theatre, thereby making a powerful I-Thou connection with both God and the enthusiasts in the cheap seats. She seemed to do this even when she was performing for an audience of one, and Edward Steichen caught her doing it in his justly famous photograph of her—her arms flung majestically upward to embrace the glory that was Greece—as she stood in loose robes between two columns of the Parthenon. The Steichen photograph is reproduced in “The Magic of Dance,” along with a photograph of Fonteyn wearing a casual shirtdress and poised between the same columns a half century or so later. Though Fonteyn’s arms are flung out, Duncan’s flowering embrace has been converted into a slightly wilted one. But the biggest difference is in the carriage of the ballerina’s head. Fonteyn can’t help herself: she seems to be laughing. Like Duncan, she sets her sights high. The object of her vision, however, is not transcendence but one of her partners—an Ionic column.

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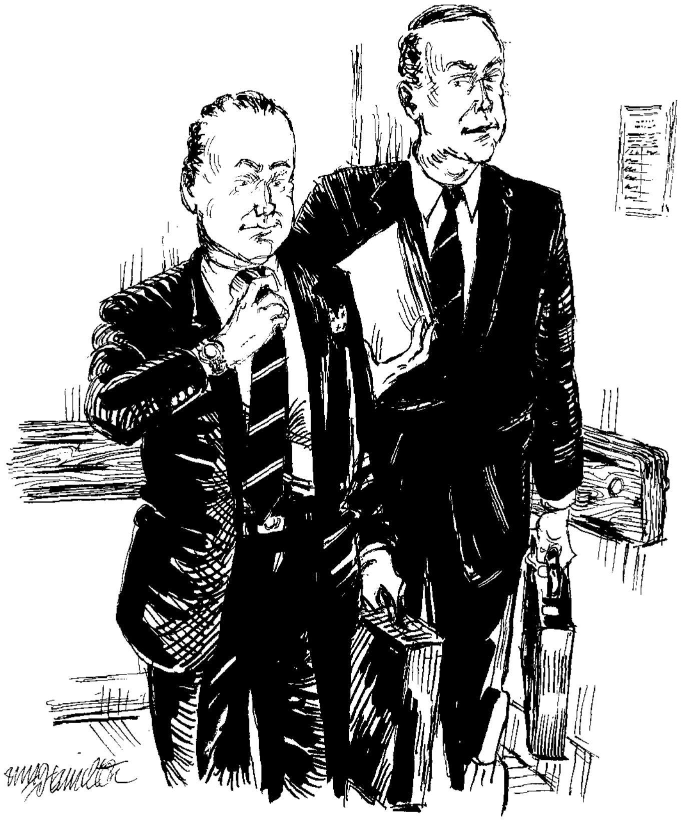
Dan’s People

MANY theoretical-minded scholars of interactive telecommunications have tried to explain the phenomenon of Dan’s Apartment. There is Theory A, dreamed up by the people at the Interactive Telecommunications Program at N.Y.U., and also a mordantly revised version of that theory, called Theory B. There is Dan’s Mom’s Standard Interpretation, and even the mindbending Dan’s Own Theory. Only a month ago, before Dan’s Apartment became a phenomenon, it was just an apartment: a generic lonely-guy one-bedroom on Eighteenth Street at First Avenue—the two-seater sofa with the scratchy tweed fabric, the big TV with all the cables coming out the back, the three desultory framed posters, the wooden dish drainer, the old refrigerator with a six-pack inside and stuff Scotch-Taped on the front, the ten-speed on its kickstand over by the door, the unmade futon. Then, in the waning weeks of the Gulf War, Dan decided to put his apartment on television, and Dan’s apartment became “Dan’s Apartment,” the late-night cable phenomenon. Veteran grazers—as people who skim back and forth across the entire cable spectrum are called—decided that on week nights from eleven to eleven-thirty (on Manhattan Cable’s Channel 25) and again from midnight to one o’clock (on Channel 6) it was a good idea to ignore Ted and Bernie and Arsenio and Rick Dees and just spend half an hour or so walking around inside Dan's Apartment.

Here is what a visit to Dan's Apartment is like. First, you see a picture of Dan's living room, and then you hear a man's voice—Dan's voice—say, “Now anyone can navigate Dan's Apartment just by speaking into their telephone.” Then a telephone number appears on the screen, and, invariably, seconds later a sign appears: “WE HAVE A CALLER.” Then a menu of commands appears on the screen: “Turn Left,” “Turn Right,” “Go,” “Reverse.” The caller (whom you can't hear at home) speaks one of the commands into the telephone, the command is highlighted on the screen, and then you get to see a little bit of Dan's Apartment. The camera turns left or right or goes forward or reverses, and sees exactly what you would see if you were actually inside Dan's apartment at Eighteenth and First. It's all there, miraculously available: you can stroll from the living room toward the bedroom, with the unmade futon beckoning you on; you can take a quick trip down the hall to look at the back of the Medeco lock; you can even (this is late-night, public-access TV) stride boldly, clinically, into Dan's bathroom, to look at Dan's shower curtain and his roll of bathroom tissue. (The décor of Dan's apartment is described by Dan himself as Early Inertia. “I sort of feel that I got in on the ground floor of that style, before anyone else got there,” he says.) Each caller is allowed four moves within Dan's Apartment, and then Dan's voice announces, “Time for another caller. We hope you enjoyed your tour.” Then another caller is allowed on the line.

The technology that enables Dan to give interactive tours of his apartment is nothing phenomenal, you discover when you visit Dan in Dan's Lab—a windowless cubicle at the N.Y.U. Interactive Telecommunications Program, in the Tisch School of the Arts, where Daniel B. O'Sullivan (to give him his full I.D.-card name) is a graduate student. Dan recorded moving images of his apartment on a video disk, wrote a simple “tree” program on a Macintosh, installed the program in an Amiga computer, wired that to a voice-recognition decoder he bought at Radio Shack for twelve dollars, hooked the whole thing up to a telephone line, and then sent it “upstream” on Manhattan Cable's cable, which happens to run underneath Broadway just by the Tisch School of the Arts, and which some of the students there have arranged to tap into. (On a video disk you can pick out any image or sequence at will, without having to run through the material before or after it, just the way you can on a musical compact disk; that's what allows Dan to give his visitors choices.) “It's primitive stuff,” Dan says. “And the voice activator doesn't really work all that well. People have got stuck for twenty minutes in my bathroom.”

Here is the real phenomenon: There is always another caller. No matter how late it is, or how long “Dan's Apartment” has been on the air, there is always a backup of people waiting to get into Dan's Apartment. “It has become sort of like an after-hours club for couch potatoes,” Dan says, bemused.



“O.K., Jimbo, let's dance with wolves.”

No one is exactly sure how many people watch other people walk around in Dan's Apartment each night, but everybody agrees that there are a lot of them—enough to have kept “Dan's Apartment” on the air for more than a month without any lag between callers. Some people—reporters, for example—have dialled frantically for hours in the hope of becoming the activating caller, without success.

“What's weird about this is that no one has ever wanted to come and visit me in my apartment,” Dan says. “I think it's an interesting apartment—I mean, it's *my* apartment. Well, I inherited the lease from my sister, and I got most of the furniture from my mom. But no one ever actually comes to visit me in my apartment. I don't have enough chairs, for one thing, and also—well, people never seemed all that anxious to come and visit me in my apartment. Sometimes I would say to the guys—you know, end of the evening, eleven o'clock, midnight—‘Hey, come over to my place,’ and people would say, ‘Yeah, well,’ but it just sort of never took off. But then I put my apartment on television, and it's like half the people in New York *flew* off their sofas and onto the phone. People I could never get to come over to my apartment come up to me now and say—really *peeved*—‘Hey, Dan, I tried for an hour last night to get through, but I never could—somebody else was always ahead of me in line to visit your apartment.’ ”

Dan's Apartment as we know it today is but a shadow of Dan's Apartment as it was meant to be. “My plan was originally much grander,” Dan says. “You were going to be able to walk through my apartment as though it were a Macintosh screen, and click on all the real-life icons. You could click on my TV and watch what Dan watches, click on the neighbor's window and see the shadows Dan sees, click on the bookcase and read Dan's Tom Clancy books. You could even turn on the lights. But it was too much work. So I thought, Well, I'll just do 'Dan's Apartment, Part One,' as a kind of pilot. I figured all of us around here would have to do the calling until we got the bugs ironed out. But then 'Dan's Apartment' just happened, as we say in television.

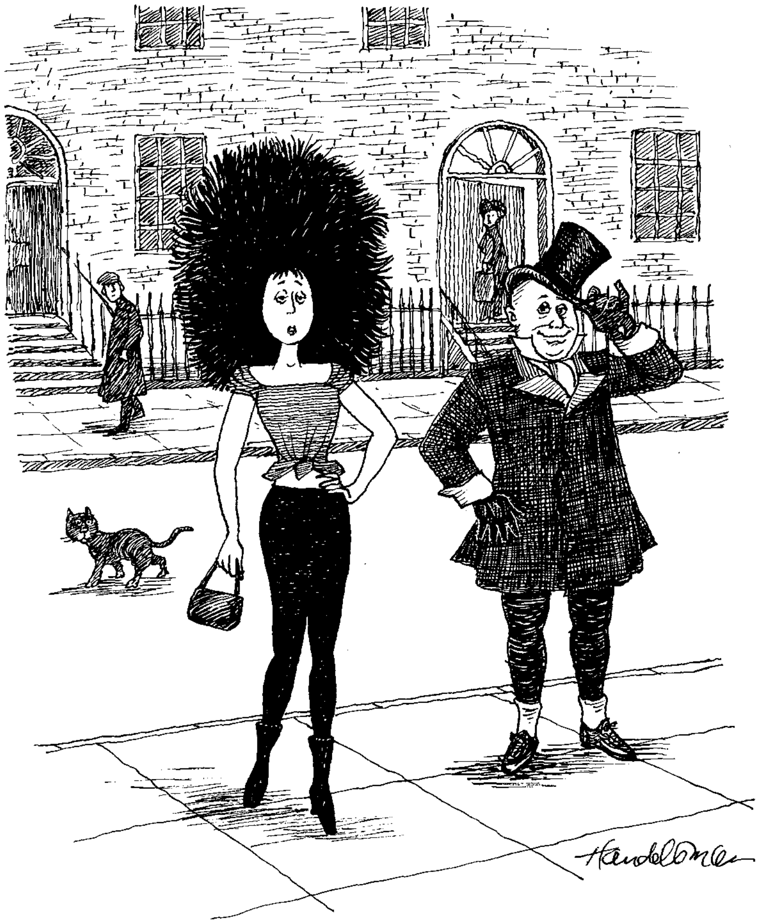
"Our first theory about why people were so involved with Dan's Apartment we called Theory A: People will watch anything on television *if you let them control it*. It's all about empowerment. If you let people have control over what they're watching on television—let them decide whether to go right or left or backward—they'll love it. That feeling of control will be enough even if they know in advance that whatever they're controlling—for example, their own path inside my apartment—is, let's face it, not that thrilling. But the trouble with Theory A was that so many more people were watching Dan's Apartment than were actually getting through on the phone. We're still trying to get the numbers, but it must be at least ten to one—for every one person who gets through, ten don't, and still sit there and watch. So then we had to arrive at a more parsimonious theory. Theory B: *People will watch anything on television*. Which, when you think about it, is not so counterintuitive. I mean, people watching Dan's Apartment is no weirder than people watching a midseason basketball game. It's just the pull of narrative. You want to find out what happens next, even if you know that whatever happens next is not going to be that exciting. Of course, I got the furniture from my mom, and she thinks people just like to look at my apartment because it has so much cool furniture in it. One of my own theories about the apartment is this—that it proves that no matter how lonely you think you are, there is always someone out there who is even lonelier."

Just Visiting

OFFICIALLY, the buildings standing astride White Street on the east side of Centre Street are known as the Manhattan Detention Complex, but since 1835 any structure here has been ominously called the Tombs. That year, the Common Council passed an appropriation of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to erect a Manhattan jail. "The prison is of white granite, built in the Egyptian style of architecture, and hence its name," Matthew Hale Smith noted in "Sunshine and Shadow in New York," an 1868 compendium. The reasons weren't entirely architectural. The Tombs plumbing was as infamous as the Tombs rats and the Tombs dank gloom. The jail had been rebuilt or spruced up five times by 1974, when Morris E. Lasker, a federal judge, decided that conditions there would "shock the conscience of any citizen who knew of them" and had it closed, two days before Christmas, and gutted. The renovated jail opened in 1983, with a three-hundred-and-eighty-eight-man capacity, and plans were immediately laid for an auxiliary wing. The wing, housing five hundred additional inmates, was erected over community protest, and opened in January of last year. To the ten-story South Tower it added a twelve-story North Tower, the two linked by an enclosed aerial bridge. The bridge has glass-block windows and spans not only White Street but also a broad unfinished street-level plaza, of brick, and, hugging the South Tower, a concrete ramp barely five feet across. If you were to stroll along Centre Street south of Canal some morning, you'd see this ramp filled with relatives and friends—in a long line, sometimes snaking as far as the curb—patiently waiting to visit inmates.

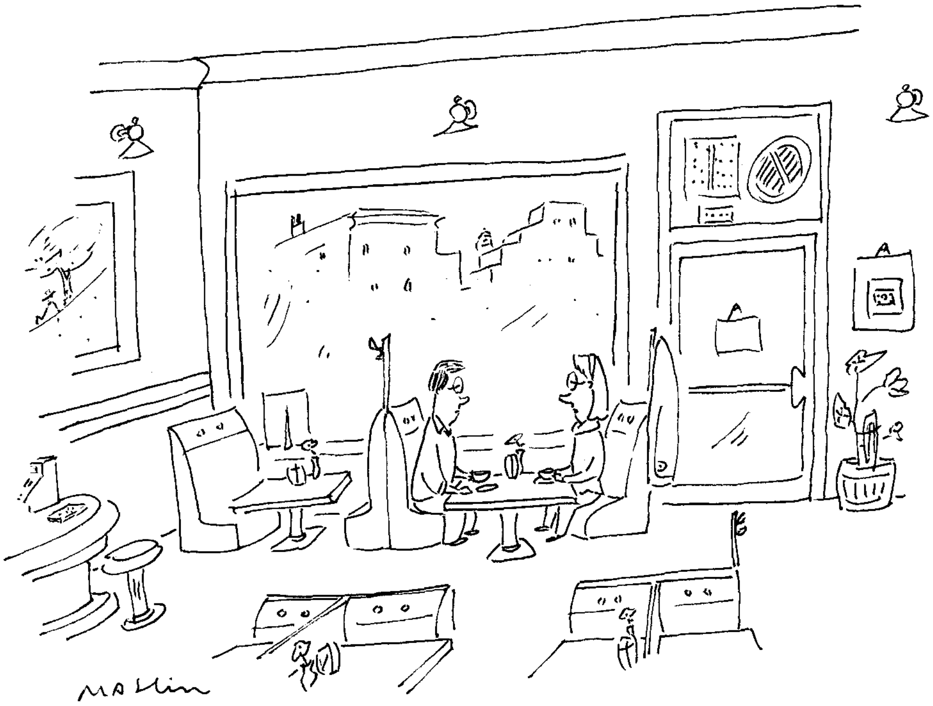
Early one recent Thursday afternoon, we crossed the bridge with Captain Robert McKnight, who'd offered us a tour of what he called "visit-house procedure." On our way to the Tombs, we had skirted a blue-and-orange prison bus parked on Centre Street, and one prisoner had leaned to the grilled window and whispered, "Inspector Clouseau. You got any acid?" In the unlikely event that we'd been carrying acid, we'd have dropped it in the Tombs Amnesty Box, a metal cylinder, standing to the right of the fortified South Tower door, in which visitors are requested to ditch knives, razors, crack vials, or heroin packets before entering the jail. Those are just some of the things

ALTERNATIVE DICKENS



STILL WAITING FOR SOMETHING TO TURN UP, MR. MICAWBER IS IGNORED BY A WOMAN WHO IS TRYING TO LOOK LIKE CHER.

you're discouraged from bringing in. The list of things you may deliver to an inmate is also impressively long, and includes one pair each of sneakers, slippers, or shoes (but no Italian loafers with metal reinforcing plates in the soles), one shirt, one sweater, one jacket, one vest, two pairs of pants, one belt, four handkerchiefs, three pairs of socks, one pair of pajamas, three undershirts, three pairs of boxers or briefs, one bathrobe, one coat, and one cap or hat. Two books or magazines are permitted, and so are ten photographs, as long as none of them picture an inmate. Every fourteen days, you can drop off four bars of soap, one container of non-alcoholic shampoo, one toothbrush, one handleless brush, two pieces of jewelry (a wedding band and a religious medallion), two clear Bic pens, ten sheets of stationery, ten envelopes, and ten stamps, and also a container of Vaseline. The Vaseline has to be the small size, and have a plastic lid. Metal lids make good weapons. So do Q-tips with wooden shafts. So do plastic playing cards. Young officers are shown a wooden board with homemade weapons mounted on it as a reminder of why the jailhouse rules exist. "When I started here, eighteen years ago, just about the only thing inmates were allowed was a pencil," Captain McKnight told us.


"We can pause, Stu—we can even try fast-forwarding—but we can never rewind."

All Manhattan arraignments take place in a series of twenty-four-hour courtrooms on Centre Street, and almost everyone booked there passes through the Tombs. There were eight hundred and ninety detainees in the jail the day we dropped by, and by three o'clock, when we left, they had had two hundred and twelve visitors. Thursday is visiting day for inmates whose last names begin with "A" through "L"; Friday for "M" through "Z." Captain McKnight ushered us through a series of electronically operated doors, over the bridge, and into the South Tower waiting area, which was crammed with young women. Most of them were black or Hispanic. Many wore Triple Fat Goose Down jackets and the huge gold shrimp earrings called puffs. Some had toddlers along and had been waiting with them in the cold since as early as 8 A.M. "Someone got to get with this system," a pretty young woman named Mayra complained mildly. "They treat us like we're the inmates sometimes."

Mayra was visiting her boyfriend, who had been in jail since Thanksgiving on what she said was a minor drug charge. It was three o'clock when we spoke with her; she'd been hanging around since eleven. Now that she had got past the outer door, she registered with a desk officer by showing him two forms of I.D.; signed an inmate ledger in invisible ink; left her belt, jewelry, coat, and sweater in a twenty-five-cent locker, along with a large button that said "The Bronx in Full Effect"; and gave her package—of comic books, Pro-Line hair conditioner, and a pair of corduroy slippers—to another officer, who logged it and passed it through a fluoroscope. Then Mayra was conducted to a small chamber where she was "visually" searched ("We're not allowed to touch them," Captain McKnight said), and after that she walked through a metal detector and was buzzed past a blue steel door and out of our sight.

Inmates are assembled in groups of ten and led to a changing room that abuts the visit house. There they trade ordinary street clothes for gray jumpsuits and wait to be summoned. By the time an inmate comes along, his visitor is most likely idling in a small wedge-shaped area that has a powerful pine-oil smell, and is probably sitting in a plastic bucket chair facing a series of jailhouse paintings and a wall-mounted TV tuned to either "Oprah" or cartoons, with the volume very loud. The visitor is probably aching to know if the inmate has actually been led to a table yet, in another part of the room, but the visitor chairs face away from that part, so there is no way of knowing that an inmate has arrived until a corrections officer calls the visitor's name. When that happens, the visitor scurries to an assigned table and seat, and tries to cram as much love, affection, and news as possible into the allotted time, which is one hour. We spotted Mayra in the visit house, leaning across a table, forehead to forehead with a dark-skinned man wearing a marcelled perm.

"We try to be reasonable about visit-house procedure," Captain McKnight told us. "This facility is for detainees only—no convicts. It's innocent until proven guilty, you know. People here can touch, kiss, hold hands across the table. But any funny stuff—any action under the table—is forbidden. It's a social thing, but these aren't conjugal visits. This is still a jail. Sitting on an inmate's lap is out."

ACROSS THE BRIDGE

WE were walking over the bridge from the Place de la Concorde, my mother and I—arm in arm, like two sisters who never quarrel. She had the invitations to my wedding in a leather shopping bag: I was supposed to be getting married to Arnaud Pons. My father's first cousin, Gaston Castelli, deputy for a district in the South, had agreed to frank the envelopes. He was expecting us at the Palais Bourbon, at the other end of the bridge. His small office looked out on nothing in particular—a wall and some windows. A typist who did not seem to *work for anyone in particular sat out*side his door. He believed she was there to spy on him, and for that reason had told my mother to keep the invitations out of sight.

I had been taken to see him there once or twice. On the wall were two photographs of Vincent Auriol, President of the Republic, one of them signed, and a picture of the restaurant where Jean Jaurès was shot to death; it showed the façade and the waiters standing in the street in their long white aprons. For furniture he had a Louis Philippe armchair, with sticking plaster around all four legs, a lumpy couch covered with a blanket, and, for visitors, a pair of shaky varnished chairs filched from another room. When the Assembly was in session he slept on the couch. (Deputies were not supposed actually to live on the premises, but some of those from out of town liked to save on hotel bills.) His son Julien was fighting in Indo-China. My mother had already cautioned me to ask how Julien was getting along and when he thought the war would be over. Only a few months earlier she might have hinted about a wedding when Julien came back, pretending to make a joke of it, but it was too late now for insinuations: I was nearly at the altar with someone else. My marrying Julien was a thought my parents and Cousin Gaston had enjoyed. In some way, we would have remained their children forever.

When Cousin Gaston came to dinner he and Papa discussed their relations in Nice and the decadent state of France. Women were not expected to join in: Maman always found a reason to go off to the kitchen and talk things over with Claudine, a farm girl from Normandy she had trained to cook and wait. Claudine was about my age, but Maman seemed much freer with her than with me; she took it for granted that Claudine was informed about all the roads and corners of life. Having no excuse to leave, I would examine the silver, the pattern on my dinner plate, my own hands. The men, meanwhile, went on about the lowering of morality and the lack of guts of the middle class. They split over what was to be done: our cousin was a Socialist, though not a fierce one. He saw hope in the new postwar managerial genera*tion, who read Marx without becoming* dogmatic Marxists, while my father thought the smart postwar men would be swept downhill along with the rest of us.

Once, Cousin Gaston mentioned why his office was so seedily fitted out. It seemed that the government had to spend great sums on rebuilding roads; they had gone to pieces during the war and, of course, were worse today. Squads of German prisoners of war sent to put them right had stuffed the roadbeds with leaves and dead branches. As the underlay began to rot, the surfaces had collapsed. Now repairs were made by French workers—unionized, Communist-led, always on the verge of a national strike. There was no money left over.

"There never has been any money left over," Papa said. "When there is, they keep it quiet."

He felt uneasy about the franking business. The typist in the hall might find out and tell a reporter on one of the opposition weeklies. The reporter would then write a blistering piece on nepotism and the misuse of public funds, naming names. (My mother never worried. She took small favors to be part of the grace of life.)

It was hot on the bridge, July in April. We still wore our heavy coats. Too much good weather was not to be trusted. There were no clouds over the river, but just the kind of firm blue sky I found easy to paint. Halfway across, we stopped to look at a boat with strings of flags, and tourists sitting along the bank. Some of the men had their shirts off. I stared at the water and saw how far below it was and how cold it looked, and I said, "If I weren't a Catholic, I'd throw myself in."

"Sylvie!"—as if she had lost me in a crowd.

"We're going to so much trouble," I said. "Just so I can marry a man I don't love."

"How do you know you don't love him?"

"I'd know if I did."

"*You haven't tried,*" *she said.* "*It* takes patience, like practicing scales. Don't you want a husband?"

"Not Arnaud."

"What's wrong with Arnaud?"

"I don't know."

"Well," after a pause, "what *do* you know?"

"I want to marry Bernard Brunelle. He lives in Lille. His father owns a big textile business—the factories, everything. We've been writing. He doesn't know I'm engaged."

"Brunelle? Brunelle? Textiles? *From Lille? It* sounds like a mistake. In Lille they just marry each other, and textiles marry textiles."

"I've got one thing right," I said. "I want to marry Bernard."

My mother was a born coaxer and wheedler; avoided confrontation, preferring to move to a different terrain and beckon, smiling. One promised nearly anything just to keep the smile on her face. She was slim and quick, like a girl of fourteen. My father liked her in flowered hats, so she still wore the floral bandeaux with their wisps of veil that had been fashionable ten years before. Papa used to tell about a funeral service where Maman had removed her hat so as to drape a mantilla over her hair. An usher, noticing the hat beside her on the pew, had placed it with the other flowers around the coffin. When I repeated the story to Arnaud he said the floral-hat anecdote was one of the world's oldest. He had heard it a dozen times, always about a different funeral. I could not see why Papa would go on telling it if it were not true, or why Maman would let him. Perhaps she was the first woman it had ever happened to.

"You say that Bernard has written

to you," she said, in her lightest, prettiest, most teasing manner. "But where did he send the letters? Not to the house. I'd have noticed."

No conspirator gives up a network that easily. Mine consisted of Chantal Nauzan, my trusted friend, the daughter of a general my father greatly admired. Recently Papa had begun saying that if I had been a boy he might have wanted a career in the Army for me. As I was a girl, he did not want me to do anything too particular or specific. He did not want to have to say, "My daughter is . . ." or "Sylvie does . . ." because it might make me sound needy or plain.

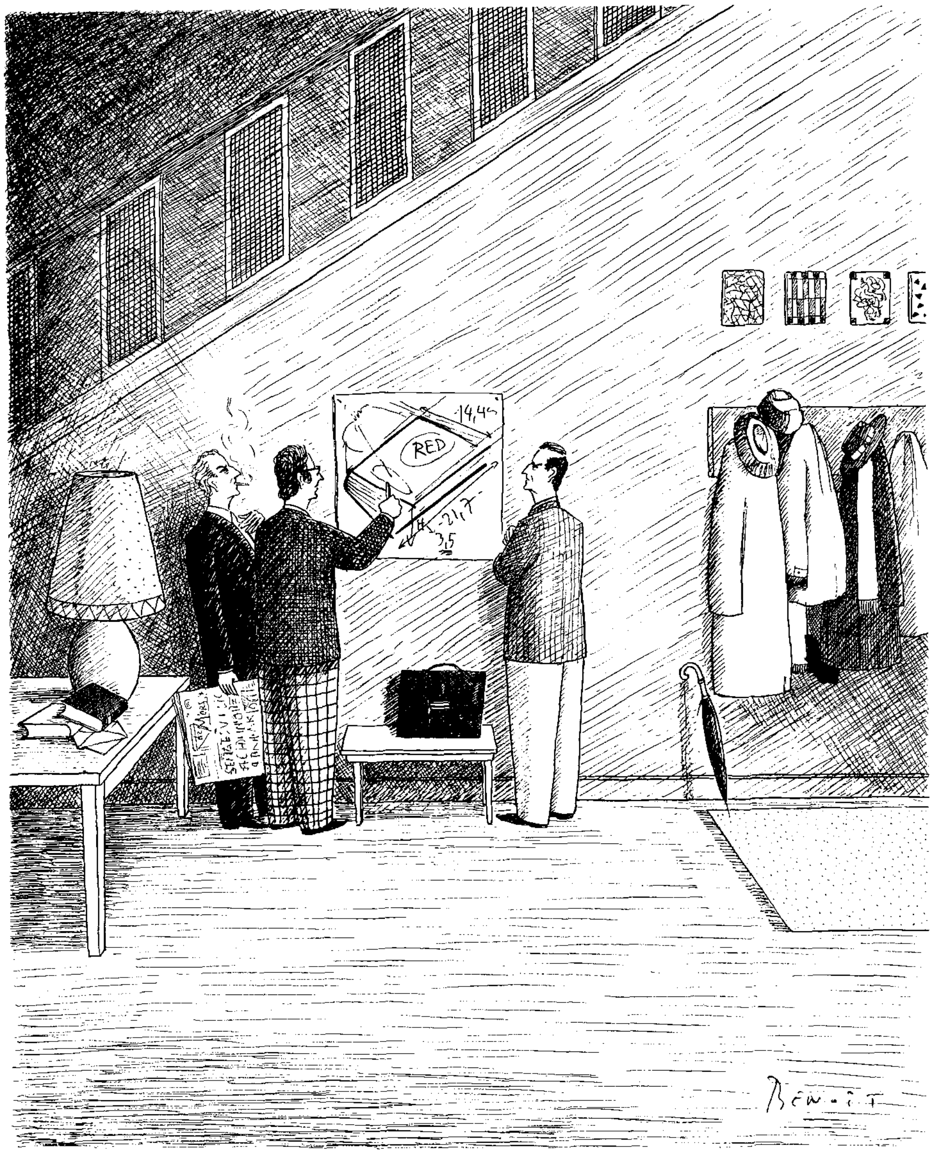
"Dear Sylvie," my mother went on. "Look at me. Let me see your eyes. Has he written 'marriage' in a letter signed with his name?" I looked away. What a question! "Would you show me the letter—the important one? I promise not to read the whole thing." I shook my head no. I was not sharing Bernard. She moved to new ground, so fast I could barely keep up. "And you would throw yourself off a bridge for him?"

"Just in my thoughts," I said. "I think about it when Arnaud makes me listen to records—all those stories about women dying, Brünnhilde and Mimi and Butterfly. I think that for the rest of my life I'll be listening to records and remembering Bernard. It's all I have to look forward to, because it is what you and Papa want."

"No," she said. "It is not at all what we want." She placed the leather bag on the parapet and turned it upside down over the river, using both hands. I watched the envelopes fall in a slow shower and land on the dark water and float apart. Strangers leaned on the parapet and stared, too, but nobody spoke.

"Papa will know what to do next," she said, altogether calmly, giving the bag a final shake. "For the time being, don't write any more letters and don't mention Bernard. Not to anyone."

I could not have defined her tone or expression. She behaved as if we had put something over on life, or on men; but that may be what I have read into it since. I looked for a clue, wondering how she wanted me to react, but she had started to walk on, making up the story we would tell our cousin, still waiting in his office to do us a good turn. (In the end, she said the wedding had to be postponed owing to a death in Arnaud's family.)



The author was most informative about his latest novel.

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"Papa won't be able to have M. Pons as a friend now," she remarked. "He's going to miss him. I hope your M. Brunelle in Lille can make up the loss."

"I have never met him," I said.

I could see white patches just under the surface of the river, quite far along. They could have been candy papers or scraps of rubbish from a barge. Maman seemed to be studying the current, too. She said, "I'm not asking you to tell me how you met him."

"In the Luxembourg Gardens. I was sketching the beehives."

"You made a nice watercolor from that sketch. I'll have it framed. You can hang it in your bedroom."

Did she mean now or after I was married? I was taller than she was: when I turned my head, trying to read her face, my eyes were level with her smooth forehead and the bandeau of daisies she was wearing that day. She said, "My girl," and took my hand—not possessively but as a sort of welcome. I was her kind, she seemed to be telling me, though she had never broken an engagement that I knew. Another of my father's stories was how she had proposed to him, had chased and cornered him and made the incredible offer. He was a young doctor then, new to Paris. Now he was an ear specialist with a large practice. His office and secretary and waiting room were in a separate wing of the apartment. When the windows were open, in warm weather, we could hear him laughing and joking with Melle Coutard, the secretary. She had been with him for years and kept his accounts; he used to say she knew all his bad secrets. My mother's people thought he was too Southern, too easily amused, too loud in his laughter. My Castelli great-grandparents had started a wholesale fruit business, across from the old bus terminal at Nice. The whole block was empty now and waiting to be torn down, so that tall buildings could replace the ochre warehouses and stores with their dark-red roofs. "CASTELLI" was still painted over a doorway, in faded blue. My father had worked hard to lose his local accent, which sounded comical in Paris and prevented patients from taking him seriously, but it always returned when he was with Cousin Gaston. Cousin Gaston cherished his own accent, polished and refined it: his voters mistrusted any voice that sounded north of Marseilles.

THE SILENT GENERATION

Afternoons in the back yard, our lives like photographs
Yellowing elsewhere,
in somebody else's album,
In secret, January south winds
Ungathering easily through the black limbs of the fruit trees.

What was it we never had to say?
Who can remember now—
Something about the world's wrongs,
Something about the way we shuddered them off like rain
In an open field,
convinced that lightning would not strike.

We're arm in arm with regret, now left foot, now right foot.
We give the devil his due.
We walk up and down in the earth,
we take our flesh in our teeth.
When we die, we die. The wind blows away our footprints.

—CHARLES WRIGHT

• •

I CANNOT say what was taking place in the world that spring; my father did not like to see young women reading newspapers. Echoes from Indo-China came to me, and news of our cousin Julien drifted around the family, but the war itself was like the murmur of a radio in a distant room. I know that it was the year of "Imperial Violets," with Luis Mariano singing the lead. At intermission he came out to the theatre lobby, where his records were on sale, and autographed programs and record sleeves. I bought "Love Is a Bouquet of Violets," and my mother and I got in line, but when my turn came I said my name so softly that she had to repeat it for me. After the performance he took six calls and stood for a long time throwing kisses.

My mother said, "Don't start to dream about Mariano, Sylvie. He's an actor. He may not mean a word he says about love."

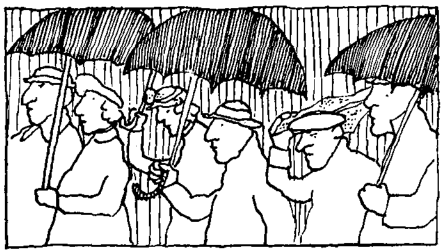
I was not likely to. He was too old for me, and I supposed that actors were nice to everybody in the same way. I wanted plenty of children and a husband who would always be there, not travelling and rehearsing. I wanted him to like me more than other people. I dreamed about Bernard Brunelle. I was engaged to Arnaud Pons.

Arnaud was the son of another man my father admired, I think more than anyone else. They had got to know each other through one of my father's patients, a M. Tarre. My father had treated him for a chronically abscessed ear—eight appointments—and, at the end, when M. Tarre asked if he wanted a check at once or preferred to send a bill, my father answered that he took cash, and on the nail. M. Tarre inquired if that was his usual custom. My father said it was the custom of every specialist he had ever heard of, on which M. Tarre threatened to drag him before an ethics committee. "And your secretary, too!" he shouted. We could hear him in the other wing. "Your accomplice in felony!" My mother pulled me away from the window and said I was to go on being nice to Melle Coutard.

It turned out that M. Tarre was retired from the Ministry of Health and knew all the rules. Papa calmed him down by agreeing to meet a lawyer M. Tarre knew, called Alexandre Pons. He liked the sound of the name, which had a ring of the South. Even when it turned out that those particular Ponses had been in Paris for generations, my father did not withdraw his good will.

M. Pons arrived a few days later, along with M. Tarre, who seemed to have all the time in the world. He told my father that a reprimand from an ethics committee was nothing compared with a charge of tax fraud. Imagine, M. Pons said, a team of men in English-style suits pawing over your accounts. He turned to his friend Tarre and continued, "Over yours, too. Once they get started."

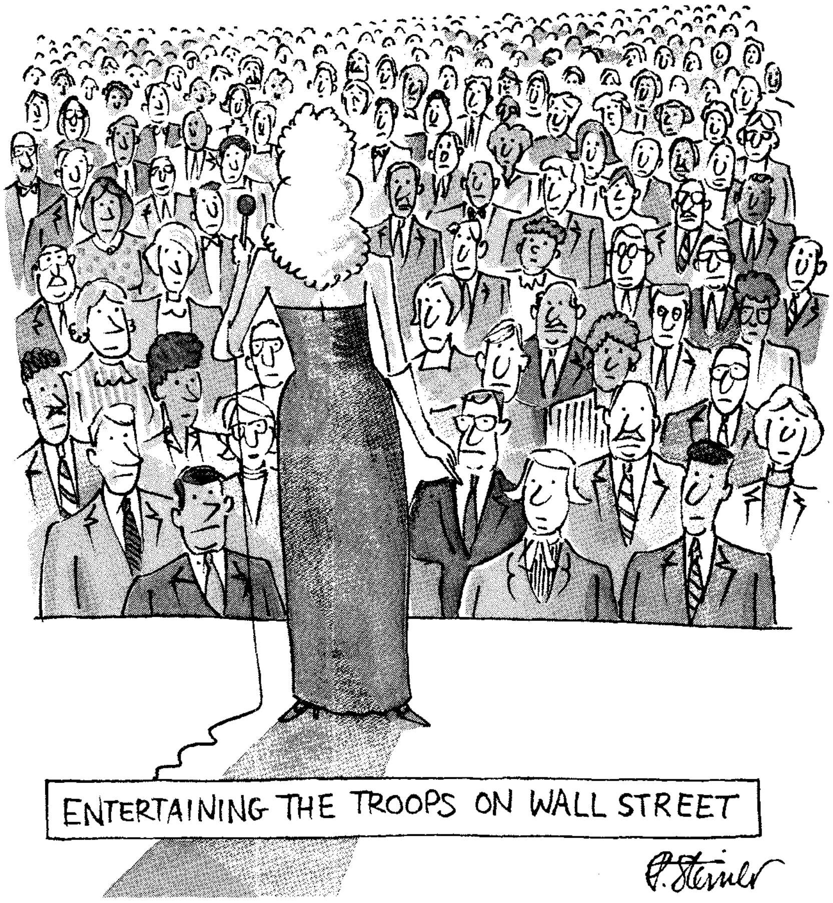
M. Tarre said that his life was a house of glass, anyone was welcome to look inside, but after more remarks from M. Pons, and a couple of generous suggestions from my father, he agreed to let the thing drop.



As a way of thanking M. Pons, as well as getting to know him better, Papa asked my mother to invite him to dinner. For some reason, M. Pons waited several days before calling to say he had a wife. She turned out to be difficult, I remember, telling how she had fainted six times in eighteen months, and announcing, just as the roast lamb was served, that the smell of meat made her feel sick. However, when my mother discovered there was also a Pons son, aged twenty-six, unmarried, living at home, and working in the legal department of a large maritime-insurance firm, she asked them again, this time with Arnaud.

During the second dinner Maman said, "Sylvie is something of an artist. Everything on the dining-room walls is Sylvie's work."

Arnaud looked around, briefly. He



ENTERTAINING THE TROOPS ON WALL STREET

• •

was silent, though not shy, with a thin face and brown hair. His mind was somewhere else, perhaps in livelier company. He ate everything on his plate, sometimes frowning; when it was something he seemed to like, his expression cleared. He glanced at me, then back at my depictions of the Roman countryside and the harbor at Naples in 1850. I was sure he could see they were replicas and that he knew the originals, and perhaps despised me.

"They are only copies," I managed to say.

"But full of feeling," said Maman.

He nodded, as if acknowledging a distant and somewhat forward acquaintance—a look neither cold nor quite welcoming. I wondered what his friends were like and if they had to pass a special test before he would consent to conversation.

After dinner, in the parlor, there was the usual difficulty over coffee. Claudine was slow to serve, and particularly slow to collect the empty cups. A chinoiserie table stood just under the chandelier, but Maman made sure nothing ever was placed on it. She found an excuse to call attention to the marble floor, because she took pleasure in the icy look of it, but no one picked up the remark. Mme. Pons was first to sit down. She put her cup on the floor, crossed her legs, and tapped her foot to some tune playing in her head. Perhaps she was recalling an evening before her marriage when she had danced wearing a pleated skirt and ropes of beads: I had seen pictures of my mother dressed that way.

I had settled my own cup predicament by refusing coffee. Now I took a chair at some distance from Mme. Pons: I guessed she would soon snap out of her dream and start to ask personal questions. I looked at my hands and saw they were stained with paint. I sat on them: nobody paid attention.

My mother was showing Arnaud loose sketches and unframed watercolors of mine that she kept in a folder—more views of Italy, copies, and scenes in Paris parks drawn from life.

"Take one! Take one!" she cried.

My father went over to see what kind of taste Arnaud had. He had picked the thing nearest him, a crayon drawing of Vesuvius—not my best work. My father laughed, and said my idea of a volcano in eruption was like a haystack on fire.

Bernard's father did not respond to my father's first approach—a letter that began: "I understand that our two children, Bernard and Sylvie, are anxious to unite their destinies." Probably he was too busy finding out if we were solvent, Papa said.

My mother cancelled the wedding dates, civil and church. There were just a few presents that had to be returned to close relatives. The names of the other guests had dissolved in the Seine. "It should be done quickly," she had told my father, once the sudden change had been explained half a dozen times and he was nearly over the shock. He wondered if haste had anything to do with disgrace, though he could hardly believe it of me. No, no, nothing like that, she said. She wanted to see me safe and settled and in good hands. Well, of course, he wanted something like that, too.

As for me, I was sure I had been put on earth to marry Bernard Brunelle and move to Lille and live in a large stone house. ("Brick," my friend Chantal corrected, when I told her. "It's all brick up in Lille.") A whole floor would be given over to my children's nurseries and bedrooms and classrooms. They would learn English, Russian, German, and Italian. There would be tutors and governesses, holidays by the sea, ponies to ride, birthday parties with huge pink cakes, servants wearing white gloves. I had never known anyone who lived exactly that way, but my vision was so precise and highly colored that it had to be prompted from Heaven. I saw the curtains in the children's rooms, and their smooth hair and clear eyes, and their neat schoolbooks. I knew it might rain in Lille, day after day: I would never complain. The weather would be part of my enchanted life.

By this time, of course, Arnaud had been invited by my father to have an important talk. But then my father balked, saying he would undertake nothing unless my mother was there. After all, I had two parents. He thought of inviting Arnaud to lunch in a restaurant—Lipp, say, so noisy and crowded that any shock Arnaud showed would not be noticed. Maman pointed out that one always ended up trying to shout over the noise, so there was a danger of being overheard. In the end, Papa asked him to come round to the apartment, at about five o'clock. He arrived with daffodils for my mother and a smaller bunch for me. He believed Papa was planning a change in the marriage contract: he would buy an apartment for us outright instead of granting a twenty-year loan, adjustable to devaluation or inflation, interest free.

They received him in the parlor, standing, and Maman handed him the sealed rejection she had helped me compose. If I had written the narrowest kind of exact analysis it would have been: "I have tried to love you, and can't. My feelings toward you are cordial and full of respect. If you don't want me to hate the sight of you, please go away." I think that is the truth about any such failure, but nobody says it. In any case, Maman would not have permitted such a thing. She had dictated roundabout excuses, ending with a wish for his future happiness. What did we mean by happiness for Arnaud? I suppose, peace of mind.

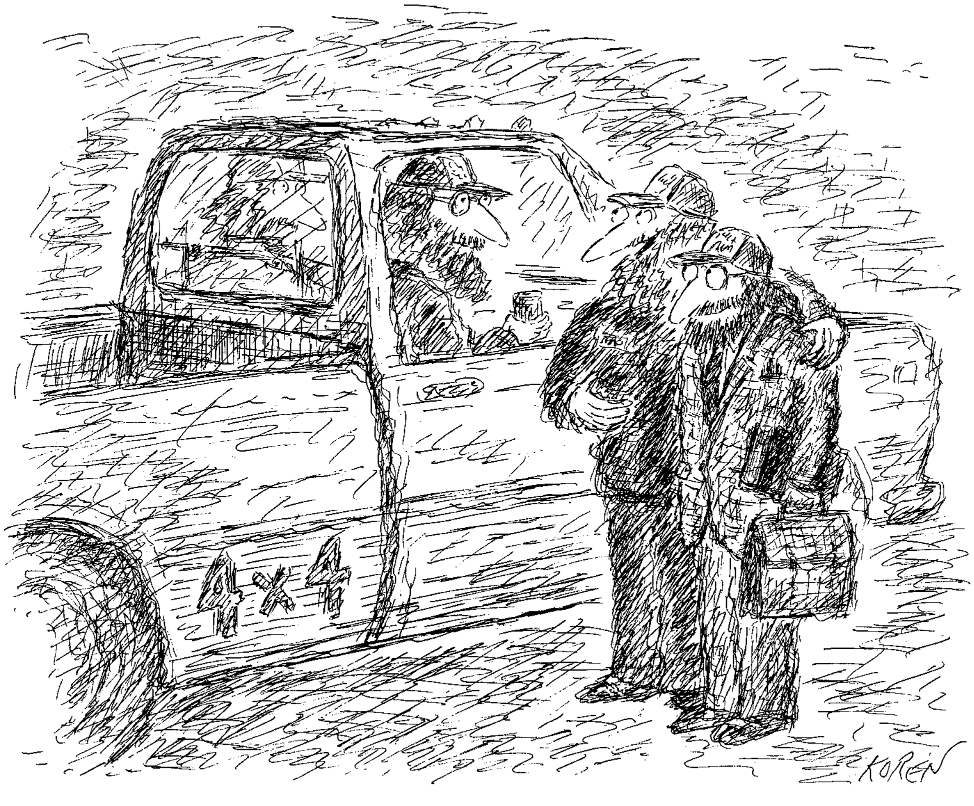
Papa walked over to the window and stood drumming on the pane. He made some unthinking remark—that he could see part of the Church of Saint-Augustin, the air was so clear. In fact, thick, gray, lashing rain obscured everything except the nearest rank of trees.

Arnaud looked up from the letter and said, "I must be dreaming." His clever, melancholy face was the color of the rain. My mother was afraid he would faint, as Mme. Pons so liked doing, and hurt his head on the marble floor. The chill of the marble had worked through everyone's shoes. She tried to edge the men over to a carpet, but Arnaud seemed paralyzed. Filling in silence, she went on about the floor: the marble came from Italy; people had warned her against it; it was hard to keep clean and it held the cold.

Arnaud stared at his own feet, then hers. Finally, he asked where I was.

"Sylvie has withdrawn from worldly life," my mother said. I had mentioned nothing in my letter about marrying another man, so he asked a second, logical question: Was I thinking of becoming a nun?

The rain, dismantling chestnut blossoms outside, sounded like gravel thrown against the windows. I know, because I was in my bedroom, just along the passage. I could not see him then as someone frozen and stunned. He was an obstacle on a railway line. My tender and competent mother had agreed to push him off the track.



"Don is an intellectual and a regular guy."

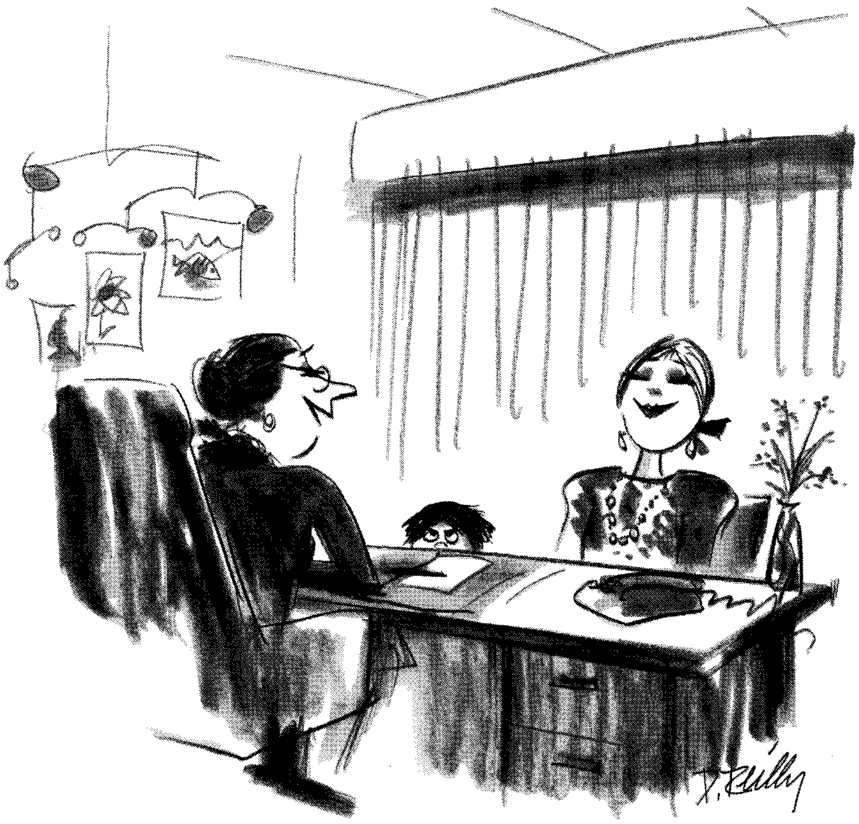
That evening I said, "What if his parents turn up here and try to make a fuss?"

"They wouldn't dare," she said. "You were more than they had ever dreamed of."

It was an odd, new way of considering the Ponses. Until then, their education and background and attention to things of the past had made up for an embarrassing lack of foresight: they had never acquired property for their only son to inherit. They lived in the same dim apartment, in a lamentable quarter, which they had first rented in 1926, the year of their marriage. It was on a street filled with uninviting stores and insurance offices, east of the Saint-Lazare station, near the old German church. (Arnaud had taken me to the church for a concert of recorded music. I had never been inside a Protestant church before. It was spare and bare and somehow useful-looking, like a large broom closet. I wondered where they hatched the Protestant plots Cousin Gaston often mentioned, such as the crushing of Mediterranean culture by peaceful means. I remember that I felt lonely and out of place, and took Arnaud's hand. He was wearing his distant, listening-to-music expression, and seemed not to notice. At any rate, he didn't mind.)

Families such as the Ponses had left the area long before, but Arnaud's father said his belongings were too ancient and precious to be bumped down a winding staircase and heaved aboard a van. Papa thought he just wanted to hang on to his renewable lease, which happened to fall under the grace of a haphazard rent-control law: he still paid just about the same rent he had been paying before the war. Whatever he saved had never been squandered on paint or new curtains. His eleven rooms shared the same degree of decay and looked alike: you never knew if you were in a dining room or somebody's bedroom. There were antique tables and bedsteads everywhere. All the mirrors were stained with those dark blotches that resemble maps. Papa often wondered if the Ponses knew what they really looked like, if they actually saw themselves as silvery-white, with parts of their faces spotted or missing.

One of the first things Mme. Pons had ever shown me was a mute harpsi-



"Naturally, we like to think that all our preschool candidates have anchor potential."

• •

chord, which she wanted to pass on to Arnaud and me. To get it to look right—never mind the sound—would have required months of expert mending, more than Arnaud could afford. Looking around for something else to talk about, I saw in a far, dim corner a bathtub and washstand, valuable relics, in their way, streaked and stained with age. Someone had used them recently: the towels on a rack nearby looked damp. I had good reason for thinking the family all used the same towels.

What went wrong for M. Pons, the winter of my engagement? Even Papa never managed to find out. He supposed M. Pons had been giving too much taxation advice, on too grand a scale. He took down from his front door the brass plate mentioning office hours and went to work in a firm that did not carry his name. His wife had an uncommon past, at once aristocratic and vaguely bohemian. My parents wondered what it could mean. My children would inherit a quarter share of blue blood, true, but they might also come by a tendency to dance naked in Montmartre. Her father had been killed in the First World War, leaving furniture, a name, and a long tradition of perishing in battle. She was the first woman in her circle ever to work. Her mother used to cry every morning as she watched her pinning her hat on and counting her lunch money. Her name was Marie-Eugènie-Paule-Diane. Her husband called her Nenanne—I never knew why.

Arnaud had studied law, for the sake of family tradition, but his true calling was to write opinions about music. He wished he had been a music critic on a daily newspaper, incorruptible and feared. He wanted to expose the sham and vulgarity of Paris taste; so he said. Conductors and sopranos would feel the extra edge of anxiety that makes for a good performance, knowing the incorruptible Arnaud Pons was in the house. (Arnaud had no way of judging whether he was incorruptible, my father said. He had never tried earning a living by writing criticism in Paris.)

We spent most of our time together listening to records, while Arnaud told me what was wrong with Toscanini or Bruno Walter. He would stop the record and play the same part again, pointing out the mistakes. The music seemed as worn and shabby as the room. I imagined the musicians in those great orchestras of the past to be covered with dust, playing on instruments cracked, split, daubed with fingerprints, held together with glue and string. My children in Lille had spotless instruments, perfectly tuned. Their music floated into a dark garden drenched with silent rain. But then my thoughts would be overtaken by the yells and screams of one of Arnaud's doomed sopranos—a Tosca, a Mimi—and I would shut my eyes and let myself fall. A still surface of water rose to meet me. I was not dying but letting go.

Bernard's father answered Papa's second approach, which had been much like the first. He said that his son was a student, with no roof or income of his own. It would be a long time before he could join his destiny to anyone's, and it would not be to mine. Bernard had no inclination for me; none whatever. He had taken me to be an attractive and artistic girl, anxious to please, perhaps a bit lonely. As an ardent writer of letters, with pen friends as far away as Belgium, Bernard had offered the hand of epistolary comradeship. I had grabbed the hand and called it a commitment. Bernard was ready to swear in court (should a lawsuit be among my father's insane intentions) that he had taken no risks and never dropped his guard with an unclaimed young person, encountered in a public park. (My parents were puzzled by "unclaimed." I had to explain that I used to take off my engagement ring and carry it loose in a pocket. They asked why. I could not remember.)

M. Brunelle, the answer went on, hoped M. Castelli would put a stop to my fervent outpourings in the form of letters. Their agitated content and their frequency—as many as three a day—interfered with Bernard's studies and, indeed, kept him from sleeping. Surely my father did not want to see me waste the passion of a young heart on a delusion that led nowhere ("on a chimera that can only run dry in the Sahara of disappointment" was what M. Brunelle actually wrote). He begged my father to accept the word of a gentleman that my effusions had been destroyed. "Gentleman" was in English and underlined.

My parents shut themselves up in their bedroom. From my own room, where I sat at the window, holding Bernard's messages, I could hear my father's shouts. He was blaming Maman. Eventually she came in, and I stood up and handed her the whole packet: three letters and a postcard.

"Just the important one," she said. "The one I should have made you show me last April. I want the letter that mentions marriage."

"It was between the lines," I said, watching her face as she read.

"It was nowhere." She seemed sorry for me, all at once. "Oh, Sylvie, Sylvie. My poor Sylvie. Tear it up. Tear every one of them up. All this because you would not try to love Arnaud."

"I thought he loved me," I said. "Bernard, I mean. He never said he didn't."

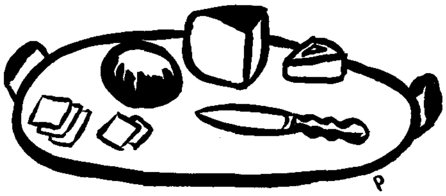
The Heaven-sent vision of my future life had already faded: the voices of my angelic children became indistinct. I might, now, have been turning the pages of an old storybook with black-and-white engravings.

I said, "I'll apologize to Papa and ask him to forgive me. I can't explain what happened. I thought he wanted what I wanted. He never said that he didn't. I promise never to paint pictures again."

I had not intended the remark about painting pictures. It said itself. Before I could take it back, Maman said, "Forgive you? You're like a little child. Does forgiveness include sending our most humble excuses to the Brunelle family and our having to explain that our only daughter is a fool? Does it account for behavior no sane person can understand? Parents knew what they were doing when they kept their daughters on a short lead. My mother read every letter I wrote until I was married. We were too loving, too lenient."

Her face looked pinched and shrunken. Her love, her loyalties, whatever was left of her youth and charm pulled away from me to be mustered in favor of Papa. She stood perfectly still, almost at attention. I think we both felt at a loss. I thought she was waiting for a signal so she could leave the room. Finally, my father called her. I heard her mutter, "Please get out of my way," though I was nowhere near the door.

My friend Chantal—my postal station, my go-between—came over as soon as she heard the news. It had been whispered by my mother to Chantal's mother, over the telephone, in a version of events that absolved me entirely and turned the Brunelles into fortune-hunting, come-lately provincial merchants and rogues. Chantal knew better, though she still believed the Brunelles had misrepresented their case and came in for censure. She had brought chocolates to cheer me up; we ate most of a box, sitting in a corner of the salon like two travellers in a hotel lobby. She wore her hair in the newest style, cut short and curled thickly on her forehead. I have forgotten the name of the actress who started the fashion: Chantal told me, but I could not take it in.



Chantal was a good friend, perhaps

PATTERN

The rug folded back with a sweep of your hand, revealing
parquetry inlaid with a pattern of sharp, elongated teeth.
Your mother had loved it. My teeth fell out, she'd say,
and became part of the house! After she died,

you never really settled in. Even the kitschy things—
the little sampan and cormorant, the Modigliani pastiche—
were hard to dump. I watched you lug them to the cellar
one by one, solemnly, without relief. For a year

you humored the antimacassars, fingered them gingerly, the lace
smarmy with her memory. Like a therapist, I'd ask you to draw up
a list of debits and credits: what was gained, what lost,
in baring the arms of the sofa. The look on your face

was pained, but one day you declared, It's not enough
to hide them anymore—and I knew you'd decided to give up
the house and all its doleful bric-a-brac. That evening,
during dinner, you vanished into her favorite room,

your place suddenly vacant, a plate of angel-hair pasta left
steaming on the table. The thought of angels, even angel hair,
had turned the talk to Rilke, and your face bore the poet's
lugubrious intensity. You could have been perched on a cliff

of Ronda in a storm, turning the ineffable into words,
as you peered over the upturned corner of your rug.
It didn't matter that the rug had its own associations—
your bleak, glorious year in Harbin, your special trip

to some dusty factory in inner Mongolia, your own flower-tangled
design scrawled on scratch paper in the manager's yurt; you saw
only what was covered, what was muted, your mother's teeth
shrouded by the cool, handwoven fibres, the losses,

only the losses. And as I leaned over to touch your
shoulder our voices rose at the same time—mine
to comfort you and bring you back to me, yours to seek
for comfort—cancelling each other out in midair

like an interference pattern, love's dazzled, dazzling imbrications.
—David Woo

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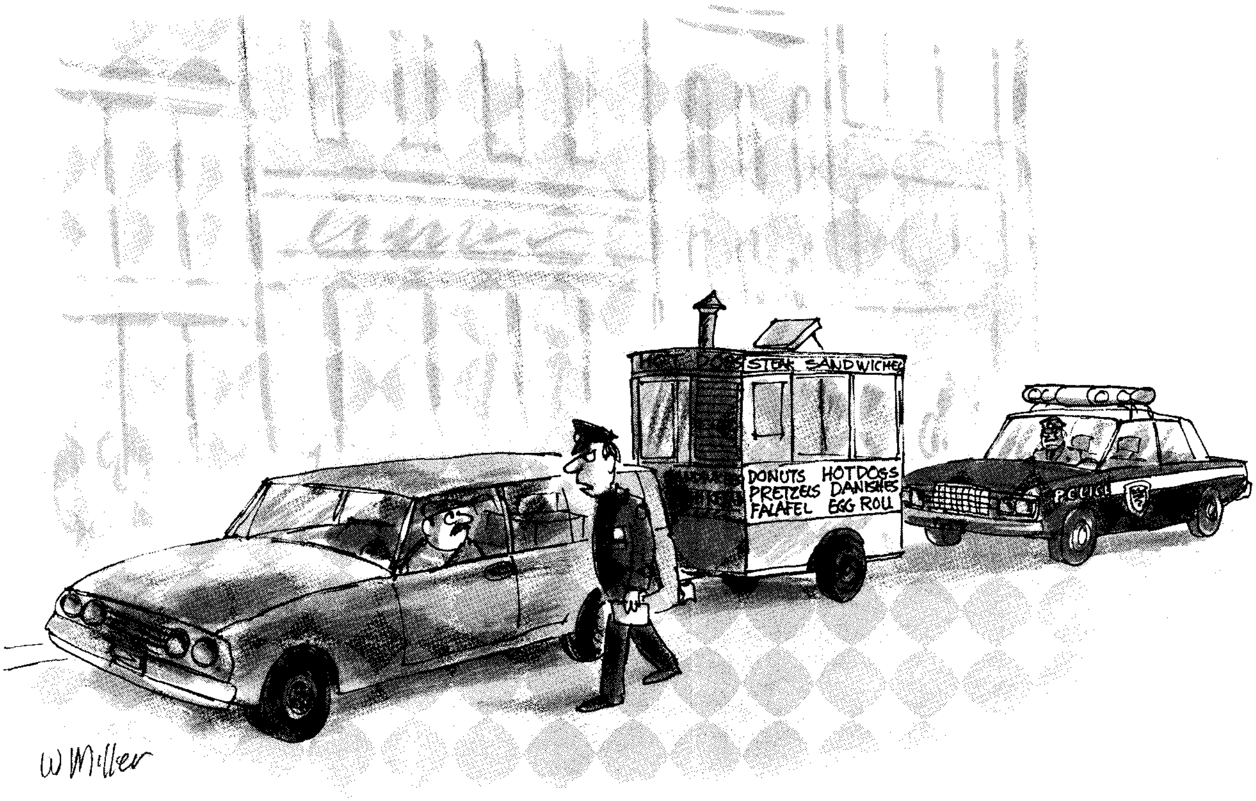


"O.K., where's the famine?"

• •

because she had never taken me seriously as a rival; and perhaps in saying this I misjudge her. At any rate, she lost no time in giving me brisk advice. I ought to cut my hair, change my appearance. It was the first step on the way to a new life. She knew I loved children and might never have any of my own: I had no idea how to go about meeting a man or how to hang on to one if he drifted my way. As the next-best thing, I should enter a training college and learn to teach nursery classes. There wasn't much to it, she said. You encouraged them to draw with crayons and sing and run in circles. You put them on pots after lunch and spread blankets on the floor for their afternoon nap. She knew plenty of girls who had done this after their engagements, for some reason, collapsed.

She had recently got to know a naval lieutenant while on a family holiday in the Alps, and now they were planning a Christmas wedding. Perhaps I could persuade my family to try the same thing; but finding a fiancé in the mountains was a new idea—to my mother chancy and doubtful, while my father imagined swindlers and foreigners trampling snow in pursuit of other men's daughters.

Since the fiasco, as he called it, Papa would not look at me. When he had anything to say he shouted it to Maman. They did not take their annual holiday that year but remained in the shuttered apartment, doing penance for my sins. The whole world was away, except us. From Normandy, Claudine sent my mother a postcard of the basilica at Lisieux and the message "My maman, being a mother, respectfully shares your grief"—as if I had died.

At dinner one night—curtains drawn, no one saying much—Papa suddenly held up his hands, palms out. "How many hands do you count?" he said, straight to me.

"Two?" I made it a question in case it was a trick.

"Right. Two hands. All I needed to pull me to the top of my profession. I gave my wife the life she wanted, and I gave my daughter a royal upbringing."

I could sense my mother's close attention, her wanting me to say whatever Papa expected. He had drunk most of a bottle of Brouilly by himself and seemed bound for headlong action. In the end, his message was a simple one: he had forgiven me. My life was a shambles and our family's reputation gravely injured, but I was not wholly to blame. Look at the young men I'd had to deal with: neutered puppies. No wonder there were so many old maids now. I had missed out on the only virile generation of the twentieth century, the age group that took in M. Pons, Cousin Gaston, and, of course, Papa himself.

"We were a strong rung on the ladder of progress," he said. "After us, the whole ladder broke down." The name of Pons, seldom mentioned, seemed to evoke some faraway catastrophe, recalled by a constant few. He bent his head and I thought, Surely he isn't going to cry. I recalled how my mother had said, "We were too loving." I saw the storehouse in Nice and our name in faded blue. There were no more Castellis, except Julien in Indo-China. I put my napkin over my face and began to bawl.

Papa cheered up. "Two hands," he said, this time to Maman. "And no help from any quarter. Isn't that true?"

"Everybody admired you," she

said. She was clearing plates, fetching dessert. I was too overcome to help; besides, she didn't want me. She missed Claudine. My mother sat down again and looked at Papa, leaving me out. I was a dreary guest, like Mme. Pons getting ready to show hysteria at the sight of a veal chop. They might have preferred her company to mine, given the choice. She had done them no harm and gave them reasons to laugh. I refused dessert, though no one cared. They continued to eat their fresh figs poached in honey, with double cream: too sugary for Maman, really, but a great favorite of Papa's. "The sweeter the food, the better the temper" was a general truth she applied to married life.

MY mother dreamed she saw a young woman pushed off the top of a tall building. The woman plunged head first, with her wedding veil streaming. The veil materialized the next day, as details of the dream returned. At first Maman described the victim as a man, but the veil confirmed her mistake. She mentioned her shock and horror at my remark on the bridge. The dream surely had been sent as a reminder: I was not to be crossed or harshly contradicted or thrust in the wrong direction. Chantal's plans for my future had struck her as worse than foolery: they seemed downright dangerous. I knew nothing about little children. I would let them swallow coins and crayon stubs, leave a child or two behind on our excursions to parks and squares, lose their rain boots and sweaters. Nursery schools were places for nuns and devoted celibates. More to the point, there were no men to be found on the premises, save the occasional inspector, already married, and underpaid. Men earning pittance salaries always married young. It was not an opinion, my mother said. It was a statistic.

Because of the dream she began to show her feelings through hints and silences or by telling anecdotes concerning wretched and despairing spinster teachers she had known. I had never heard their names before and wondered when she had come across all those Martines and Georgettes. My father, closed to dreams, in particular the threatening kind, wanted to know why I felt such an urge to wipe the noses and bottoms of children who were no relation of mine. Dealing with one's own offspring was thankless enough. He spoke of the violent selfishness of the young, their mindless questions, their love of dirt. Nothing was more deadening to an adult intellect than a child's cycle of self-centered days and long, shapeless summers.

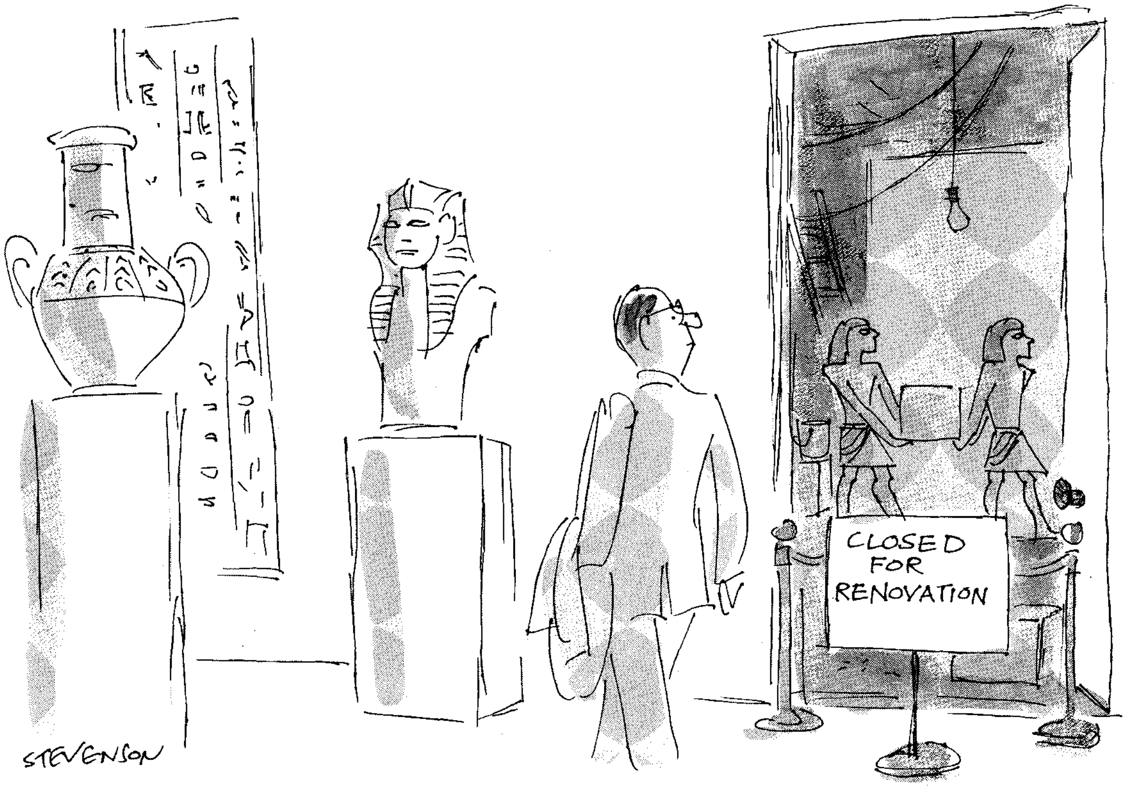
I began to sleep late. Nothing dragged me awake, not even the sound of Papa calling my mother from room to room. At noon I trailed unwashed to the kitchen and heated leftover coffee. Claudine, having returned to claim all my mother's attention, rinsed lettuce and breaded cutlets for lunch, and walked around me as though I were furniture. One morning Maman brought my breakfast on a tray, sat down on the edge of the bed, and said Julien had been reported missing. He could be a prisoner or he might be dead. Waiting for news, I was to lead a quiet life and to pray. She was dressed to go out, I remember, wearing clothes for the wrong season—all in pale blue, with a bandeau of forget-me-nots and her turquoise earrings and a number of little chains. Her new watch, Papa's latest present, was the size of a coin. She had to bring it up to her eyes.

"It isn't too late, you know," she said. I stared at her. "Too late for Arnaud."

I supposed she meant he could still be killed in Indo-China, if he wanted that. To hear Cousin Gaston and Papa, one could imagine it was all any younger man craved. I started to say that Arnaud was twenty-seven now and might be too old for wars, but Maman broke in: Arnaud had left Paris and gone to live in Rennes. Last April, after the meeting in the parlor, he had asked his maritime-insurance firm to move him to a branch office. It had taken months to find him the right place; being Arnaud, he wanted not only a transfer but a promotion. Until just five days ago he had never been on his own. There had always been a woman to take care of him; namely, Mme. Pons. Mme. Pons was sure he had already started looking around in Rennes for someone to marry. He would begin with the girls in his new office, probably, and widen the circle to church and concerts.

"It isn't too late," said Maman.

"Arnaud hates me



“It was a good script, but it didn’t take me to a new place.”

now,” I said. “Besides, I can work. I can take a course in something. Mme. Pons worked.”

“We don’t know what Mme. Pons did.”

“I could mind children, take them for walks in the afternoon.”

My double file of charges, hand in hand, stopped at the curb. A policeman held up traffic. We crossed and entered the court of an ancient abbey, now a museum. The children clambered over fragments of statues and broken columns. I showed them medieval angels.

Mme. Pons did not want a strange daughter-in-law from a provincial city, my mother said. She wanted me, as before.

For the first time I understood about the compact of mothers and the conspiracy that never ends. They stand together like trees, shadowing and protecting, shutting out the view if it happens to suit them, letting in just so much light. She started to remove the tray, though I hadn’t touched a thing.

“Get up, Sylvie,” she said. It would have seemed like an order except for the tone. Her coaxing, teasing manner had come back. I was still wondering about the pale-blue dress: was she pretending it was spring, trying to pick up whatever had been dropped in April? “It’s time you had your hair cut. Sometimes you look eighteen. It may be part of your trouble. We can lunch at the Trois Quartiers and buy you some clothes. We’re lucky to have Papa. He never grumbles about spending.”

My mother had never had her own bank account or signed a check. As a married woman she would have needed Papa’s consent, and he preferred to hand over wads of cash, on demand. Melle Coutard got the envelopes ready and jotted the amounts in a ledger. Owing to a system invented by M. Pons, the money was deducted from Papa’s income tax.

“And then,” said Maman, “you can go to the mountains for two weeks.” It was no surprise: Chantal and her lieutenant wanted to return to Chamonix on a lovers’ pilgrimage, but General Nauzan, Chantal’s father, would not hear of it unless I went, too. It was part of my mission to sleep in her room: the Nauzans would not have to rush the wedding or have a large and healthy baby appear seven months after the ceremony, to be passed off as premature. So I would not feel like an odd number—in the daytime, that is—the lieutenant would bring along his brother, a junior tennis champion, aged fifteen.

(We were well into our first week at Chamonix before Chantal began to disappear in the afternoon, leaving me to take a tennis lesson from the champion. I think I have a recollection of her telling me, late at night, in the darkness of our shared room, “To tell you the truth, I could do without all that side of it. Do you want to go with him tomorrow, instead of me? He thinks you’re very nice.” But that kind of remembering is like trying to read a book with some of the pages torn out. Things are said at intervals and nothing connects.)

I got up and dressed, as my mother wanted, and we took the bus to her hairdresser’s. She called herself Ingrid. Pasted to the big wall mirror were about a dozen photographs cut from *Paris Match* of Ingrid Bergman and her little boy. I put on a pink smock that covered my clothes and Ingrid cut my long hair. My mother saved a few locks, one for Papa, the others in case I ever wanted to see what I had once been like, later on. The two women decided I would look silly with curls on my forehead, so Ingrid combed the new style sleek.

What Chantal had said was true: I looked entirely different. I seemed poised, sharp, rather daunting. Ingrid held a looking glass up so I could see the back of my head and my profile. I turned my head slowly. I had a slim neck and perfect ears and my mother’s forehead. For a second a thought flared, and then it died: with her blue frock and blue floral hat and numerous trinkets Maman was like a little girl dressed up. I stared and stared, and the women smiled at each other. I saw their eyes meet in the mirror. They thought they were watching emerging pride, the kind that could make me strong. Even vanity would have pleased them; any awakening would do.

I felt nothing but the desire for a life to match my changed appearance. It was a longing more passionate and mysterious than any sort of love. My role could not be played by another person. All I had to do now was wait for my true life to reveal itself and the other players to let me in.

My father took the news from Indo-China to be part of a family curse. He had hoped I would marry Julien. He would have had Castelli grandchildren. But Julien and I were too close in age and forever squabbling. He was more like a brother. "Lover" still held a small quantity of false knowledge. Perhaps I had always wanted a stranger. Papa said the best were being taken, as in all wars. He was sorry he had not been gunned down in the last one. He was forty-nine and had survived to see his only daughter washed up, a decent family nearly extinct, the whole nation idle and soft.

He repeated all these things, and more, as he drove me to the railway station where I was to meet Chantal, the lieutenant, and the junior champion. His parting words reproached me for indifference to Julien's fate, and I got on the train in tears.

My mother was home, at the neat little desk where she plotted so many grave events. For the first time in her life, she delivered an invitation to dinner by telephone. I still have the letter she sent me in Chamonix, describing what they had had to eat and what Mme. Pons had worn: salmon-pink, sleeveless, with spike heels and fake pearls. She had also worn my rejected engagement ring. Mme. Pons could get away with lack of judgment and taste, now. We were the suppliants.

My father had been warned it would be fish, because of Mme. Pons, but he forgot and said quite loudly, "Are you trying to tell me there's nothing after the turbot? Are the butchers on strike? Is it Good Friday? Has the whole world gone crazy? Poor France!" he said, turning to M. Pons. "I mean it. These changes in manners and customs are part of the decline."

The two guests pretended not to hear. They gazed at my painting of the harbor at Naples—afraid, Papa said later, we might try to give it to them.

WHEN Papa asked if I'd enjoyed myself in the Alps I said, "There was a lot of tennis." It had the dampening effect I had hoped for, and he began to talk about a man who had just deserted from the Army because he was a pacifist, and who ought to be shot. Maman took me aside as soon as she could and told me her news: Arnaud was still undecided. His continued license to choose was like a spell of restless weather. The two mothers studied the sky. How long could it last? He never mentioned me, but Mme. Pons was sure he was waiting for a move.

"What move?" I said. "A letter from Papa?"

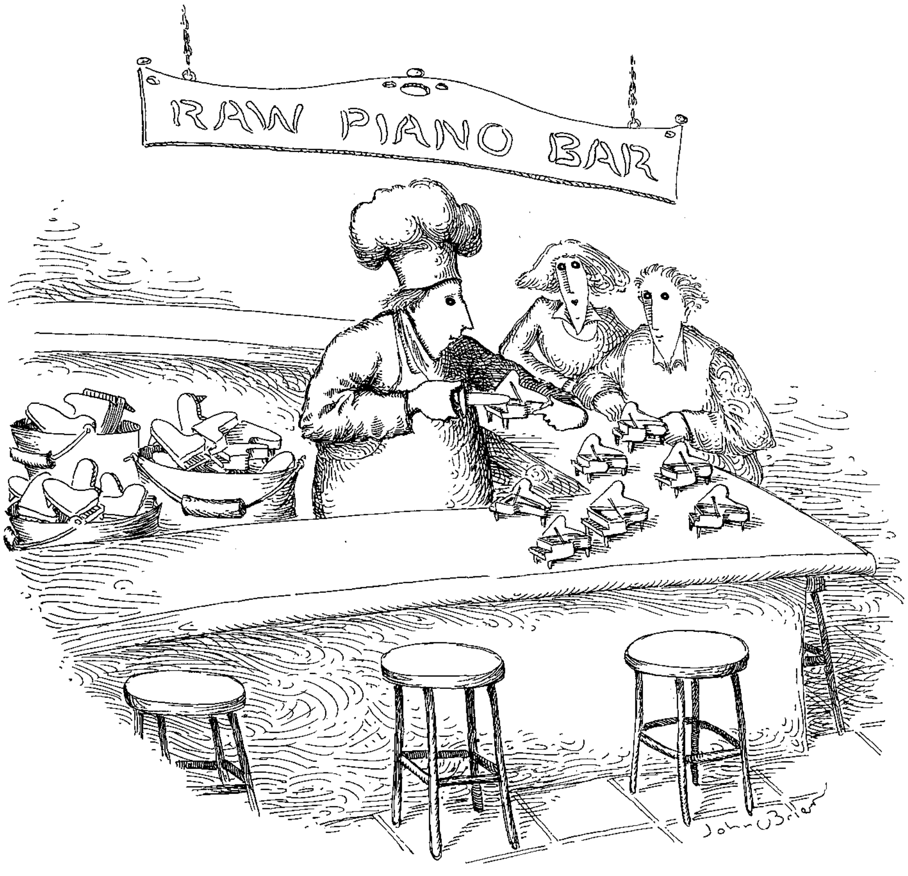
"You can't expect Papa to write any more letters," she said. "It has to come from you."

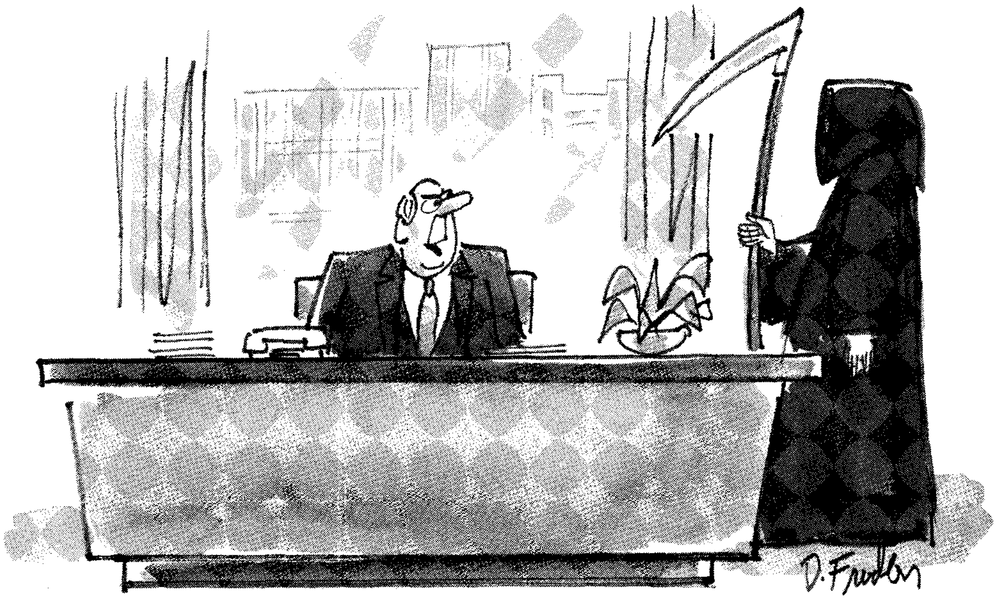
Once again, I let my mother dictate a letter for Arnaud. I had no idea what to say; or, rather, of the correct way of saying anything. It was a formal request for an appointment, at Arnaud's convenience, at the venue of his choice. That was all. I signed my full name: Sylvie Mireille Castelli. I had never written to anyone in Rennes before. I could not imagine his street. I wondered if he lived in someone else's house or had found his own apartment. I wondered who made his breakfast and hung up his clothes and changed the towels in the bathroom. I wondered how he would feel when he saw my handwriting; if he would burn the letter, unread.

He waited ten days before saying he did not mind seeing me, and suggested having lunch in a restaurant. He could come to Paris on a Sunday, returning to Rennes the same day. It seemed to me an enormous feat of endurance. The fastest train, in those days, took more than three hours. He said he would let me know more on the matter very soon. The move to Rennes had worn him down and he needed a holiday. He signed "A. Pons." ("That's new," my father said, about the invitation to lunch. He considered Arnaud's approach to money to be conservative, not to say nervous.)

HE arrived in Paris on the third Sunday in October, finally, almost a year to the day from our first meeting. I puzzled over the timetable, wondering why he had chosen to get up at dawn to catch a train that stopped everywhere when there was a direct train two hours later. Papa pointed out the extra-fare sign for the express. "And Arnaud . . . " he said, but left it at that.

Papa and I drove to the old Montparnasse station, where the trains came in from the west of France. Hardly anyone remembers it now: a low gray





"Can you give me a minute? There are a few key people I want to take along with me."

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building with a wooden floor. I have a black-and-white postcard that shows the curb where my father parked his Citroën and the station clock we watched and the door I went through to meet Arnaud face to face. We got there early and sat in the car, holding hands sometimes, listening to a Sunday-morning program of political satire—songs and poems and imitations of men in power—but Papa soon grew tired of laughing alone and switched it off. He smoked four Gitanes from a pack Uncle Gaston had left behind. When his lighter balked he pretended to throw it away, trying to make me smile. I could see nothing funny about the loss of a beautiful silver lighter, the gift of a patient. It seemed wasteful, not amusing. I ate some expensive chocolates I found in the glove compartment: Melle Coutard's, I think.

He kept leaning forward to read the station clock, in case his watch and my watch and the dashboard clock were slow. When it was time, he kissed me and made me promise to call the minute I knew the time of Arnaud's return train, so he could come and fetch me. He gave me the names of two or three restaurants he liked, pointing in the direction of the Boulevard Raspail—places he had taken me that smelled of cigars and red Burgundy. They looked a bit like station buffets, but were more comfortable and far more expensive. I imagined that Arnaud and I would be walking along the boulevard in the opposite direction, where there were plenty of smaller, cheaper places. Papa and Cousin Gaston smoked Gitanes in memory of their student days. They did, sometimes, visit the restaurants of their youth, where the smells were of boiled beef and fried potatoes and dark tobacco, but they knew the difference between a sentimental excursion and a good meal.

As I turned away, my heart pounding enough to shake me, I heard him say, "Remember, whatever happens, you will always have a home," which was true but also a manner of speaking.

THE first passenger off the train was a girl with plastic roses pinned to her curly hair. She ran into the arms of two other girls. They looked alike, in the same long coats with ornamental buttons, the same frothy hair and plastic hair slides. One of the Parisians took the passenger's cardboard suitcase and they went off, still embracing and chattering. Chantal had warned me not to speak to any man in the station, even if he seemed respectable. She had described the sad girls who came from the west, a deeply depressed area, to find work as maids and waitresses, and the gangsters who hung around the train gates. They would pick the girls up and after a short time put them on the street. If a girl got tired of the life and tried to run away, they had her murdered and her body thrown in the Seine. The crimes were never solved; nobody cared.

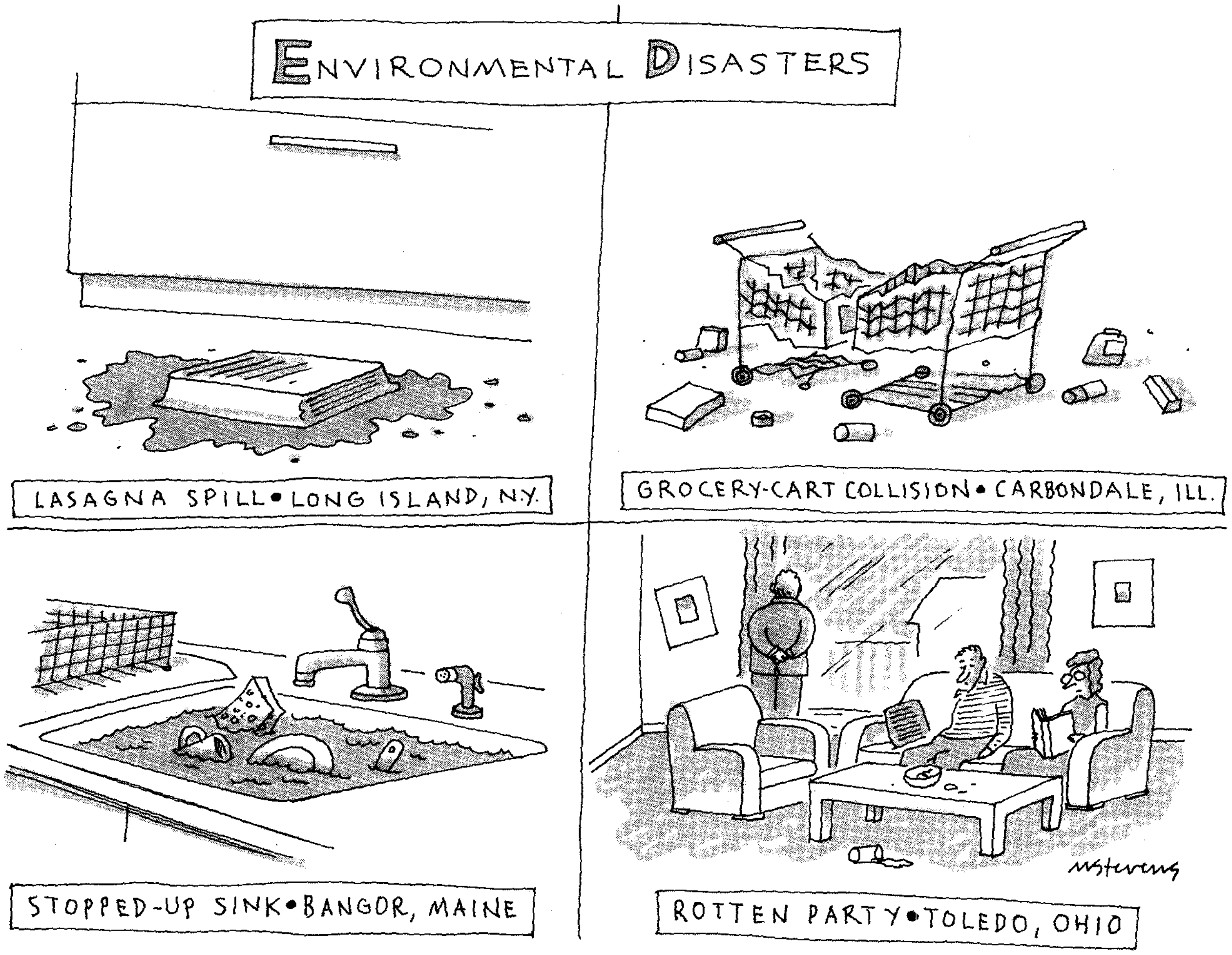
Actually, most of the men I saw looked like citified Breton farmers. I had a problem that seemed, at the moment, far more acute than the possibility of being led astray and forced into prostitution. I had no idea what to say to Arnaud, how to break the ice. My mother had advised me to talk about Rennes if conversation ran thin. I could mention the great fire of 1720 and the fine houses it had destroyed. Arnaud walked straight past me and suddenly turned back. On his arm he carried a new raincoat with a plaid lining. He was wearing gloves; he took one off to shake hands.

I said, "I've had my hair cut."

"So I see."

That put a stop to 1720, or anything else, for the moment. We crossed the Boulevard du Montparnasse without touching or speaking. He turned, as I had expected, in the direction of the cheaper restaurants. We read and discussed the menus posted outside. He settled on Rougeot. Not only did Rougeot have a long artistic and social history, Arnaud said, but it offered a fixed-price meal with a variety of choice. Erik Satie had eaten here. No one guessed how poor Satie had been until after his death, when Cocteau and others had visited his wretched suburban home and learned the truth. Rilke had eaten here, too. It was around the time when he was discovering Cézanne and writing those letters. I recognized Arnaud's way of mentioning famous people, pausing before the name and dropping his voice.

The window tables were already taken. Arnaud made less fuss than I expected. Actually, I had never been alone at a restaurant with Arnaud; it was my father I was thinking of, and how violently he wanted whatever he wanted. Arnaud would not hang up his coat. He had bought it just the day before and did not want a lot of dirty garments full of fleas in close touch. He folded it on a chair, lining out. It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fell on the floor every time a waiter went by.

I memorized the menu so I could describe it to Maman. Our first course was hard-boiled eggs with mayonnaise, then we chose the liver. Liver was something his mother would not have in the house, said Arnaud. As a result, he and his father were chronically lacking in iron. I wanted to ask where he ate his meals now, if he had an obliging landlady who cooked or if he had the daily expense of a restaurant; but it seemed too much like prying.

The red wine, included in the menu, arrived in a thick, stained decanter. Arnaud asked to be shown the original label. The waiter said the label had been thrown away, along with the bottle. There was something of a sneer in his voice, as if we were foreigners, and Arnaud turned away coldly. The potatoes served with the liver had been boiled early and heated up: we both noticed. Arnaud said it did not matter; because of the wine incident, we were never coming back. "We" suggested a common future, but it may have been a slip of the tongue; I pretended I hadn't heard. For dessert I picked custard flan and Arnaud had prunes in wine. Neither of us was hungry by then, but dessert was included, and it would have been a waste of money to skip a course. Arnaud made some reference to this.

I want to say that I never found him mean. He had not come to Paris to charm or impress me; he was here to test his own feelings at the sight of me and to find out if I understood what getting married meant—in particular, to him. His conversation was calm and instructive. He told me about "situations," meaning the entanglements people got into when they were characters in novels and plays. He compared the theatre of Henry de Montherlant with Jean Anouilh's: how they considered the part played by innocent girls in the lives of more worldly men. To Anouilh a girl was a dove, Arnaud said, an innocent dressed in white, ultimately and almost accidentally destroyed. Montherlant saw them as ignorant rather than innocent—more knowing than any man suspected, unlearned and crass.

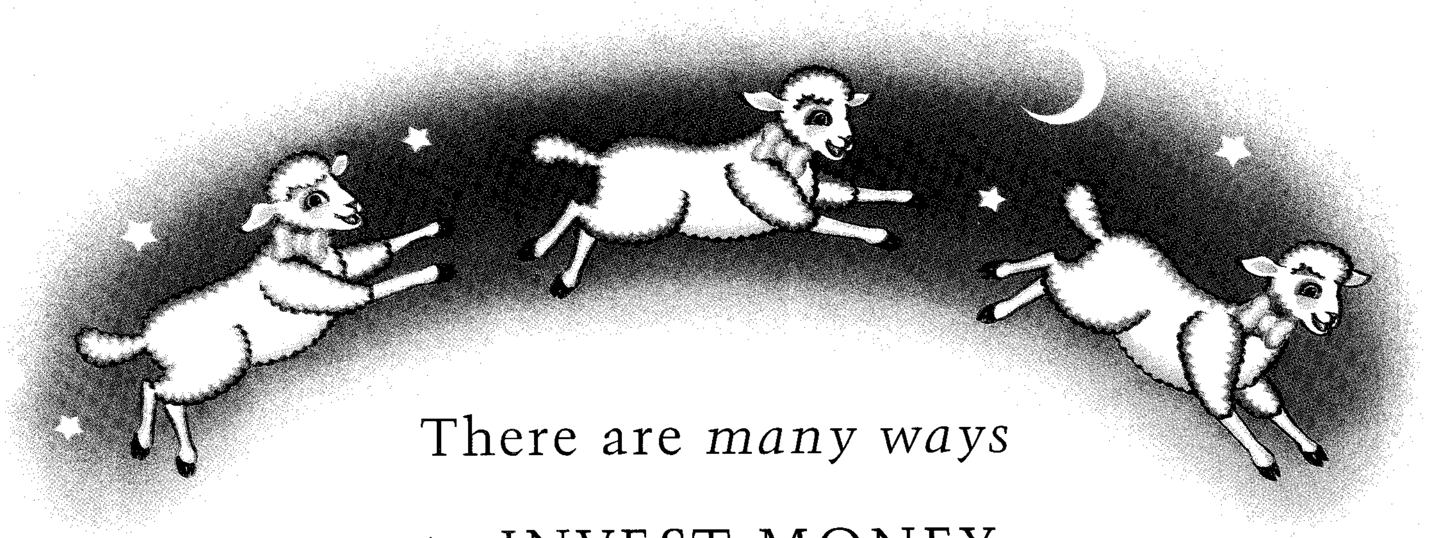
All at once he said a personal thing: "You aren't eating your dessert."

"There's something strange on it," I said. "Green flakes."

He pulled my plate over and scraped the top of the flan with my spoon. (I had taken one bite and put the spoon down.) "Parsley," he said. "There was a mistake made in the kitchen. They took the flan for a slice of quiche."

"I know it is paid for," I said. "But I can't."

I was close to tears. It occurred to me that I sounded like Mme. Pons. He began to eat the flan, slowly, using my spoon. Each time he put the spoon in his mouth I said to myself, He must love me. Otherwise it would be disgusting. When he had finished, he folded his napkin in the exact way that always annoyed my mother and said he loved me. Oh, not as before, but enough to let him believe he could live with me. I was not to apologize for last spring or



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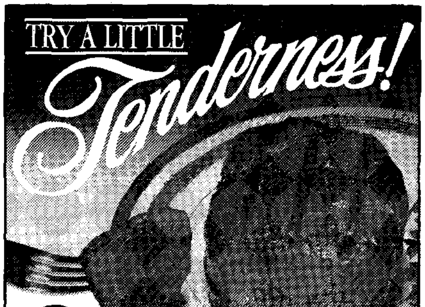

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to ask for forgiveness. As Cosima had said to Hans von Bülow, after giving birth to Wagner's child, forgiveness was not called for—just understanding. (I knew who Wagner was, but the rest bewildered me utterly.) I had blurted out something innocent, impulsive, Arnaud continued, and my mother—herself a child—had acted as though it were a mature decision. My mother had told his mother about the bridge and the turning point; he understood that, too. He knew all about infatuation. At one time he had actually believed my drawing of Vesuvius could bring him luck, and had carried it around with the legal papers in his briefcase. That was how eaten up by love he had been, at twenty-six. Well, that kind of storm and passion of the soul was behind him. He was twenty-seven, and through with extremes. He blamed my mother, but one had to take into account her infantile nature. He was inclined to be harder on Bernard—speaking the name easily, as if "Bernard Brunelle" were a character in one of the plays he had just mentioned. Brunelle was a vulgar libertine, toying with the feelings of an untried and trustful girl and discarding her when the novelty wore off. He, Arnaud, was prepared to put the clock back to where it had stood exactly a second before my mother wrenched the wedding invitations out of my hands and hurled them into the Seine.

Seated beside a large window that overlooked the terrace and boulevard were the three curly-haired girls I had noticed at the station. They poured wine for each other and leaned into the table, so that their heads almost touched. Above them floated a flat layer of thin blue smoke. Once I was married, I thought, I would smoke. It would give me something to do with my hands when other people talked, and would make me look as if I were enjoying myself. One of the girls caught me looking, and smiled. It was a smile of recognition, but hesitant, too, as if she wondered if I would want to acknowledge her. She turned back, a little disappointed. When I looked again, I had a glimpse of her in profile, and saw why she had seemed familiar and yet diffident: she was the typist who sat outside Cousin Gaston's office, who had caused him and Papa so much anxiety and apprehension. She was just eighteen—nineteen at most. How could they have taken her for a spy? She was one of three kittenish friends, perhaps sisters, from the poorest part of France.

Look at it this way, Arnaud was saying. We had gone through tests and trials, like Tamino and Pamina, and had emerged tempered and strong. I must have looked blank, for he said, a little sharply, "In 'The Magic Flute.' We spent a whole Sunday on it. I translated every word for you—six records, twelve sides."

I said, "Does she die?"

"No," said Arnaud. "If she had to die we would not be sitting here." Now, he said, lowering his voice, there was one more thing he needed to know. This was not low curiosity on his part, but a desire to have the whole truth spread out—"like a sheet spread on green grass, drying in sunshine" was the way he put it. My answer would make no difference; his decisions concerning me and our future were final. The question was, had Bernard Brunelle *succeeded* and, if so, to what extent? Was I entirely, or partly, or not at all the same as before? Again, he said the stranger's name as if it were an invention, a name assigned to an imaginary life.

It took a few moments for me to understand what Arnaud was talking about. Then I said, "Bernard Brunelle? Why, I've never even kissed him. I saw him only that once. He lives in Lille."

HIS return train did not leave for another hour. I asked if he would like to walk around Montparnasse and look at the famous cafés my father liked, but the sidewalk was spotted with rain, and I think he did not want to get his coat wet. As we crossed the boulevard again, he took my arm and remarked that he did not care for Bretons and their way of thinking. He would not spend his life in Rennes. Unfortunately, he had asked for the transfer and the firm had actually created a post for him. It would be some time before he could say he had changed his mind. In the meantime, he would come to Paris every other weekend. Perhaps I could come to Rennes, too, with or without a friend. We had reached the age of common sense and could be trusted. Some of the beaches in Brittany were all right, he said, but you never could be sure of the weather. He preferred the Basque coast, where his mother used to take him when he was a child. He had just spent four weeks there, in fact.

I did not dare ask if he had been alone; in any case, he was here, with me. We sat down on a bench in the station. I could think of nothing more to say. The great fire of 1720 seemed inappropriate as a topic for someone who had just declared an aversion to Bretons and their history. I had a headache, and was just as glad to be quiet. I wondered how long it would take to wean him away from the Pons family habit of drinking low-cost wine. He picked up a newspaper someone had left behind and began to read yesterday's news. There was more about the pacifist deserter; traitors (I supposed they must be that) were forming a defense committee. I thought about Basque beaches, wondering if they were sand or shale, and if my children would be able to build sand castles.

Presently Arnaud folded the paper, in the same careful way he always folded a table napkin, and said I ought to follow Chantal's suggestion and get a job teaching in a nursery school. (So Maman had mentioned that to Mme. Pons, too.) I should teach until I had enough working time behind me to claim a pension. It would be good for me in my old age to have an income of my own. Anything could happen. He could be killed in a train crash or called up for a war. My father could easily be ruined in a lawsuit and die covered with debts. There were advantages to teaching, such as long holidays and reduced train fares.

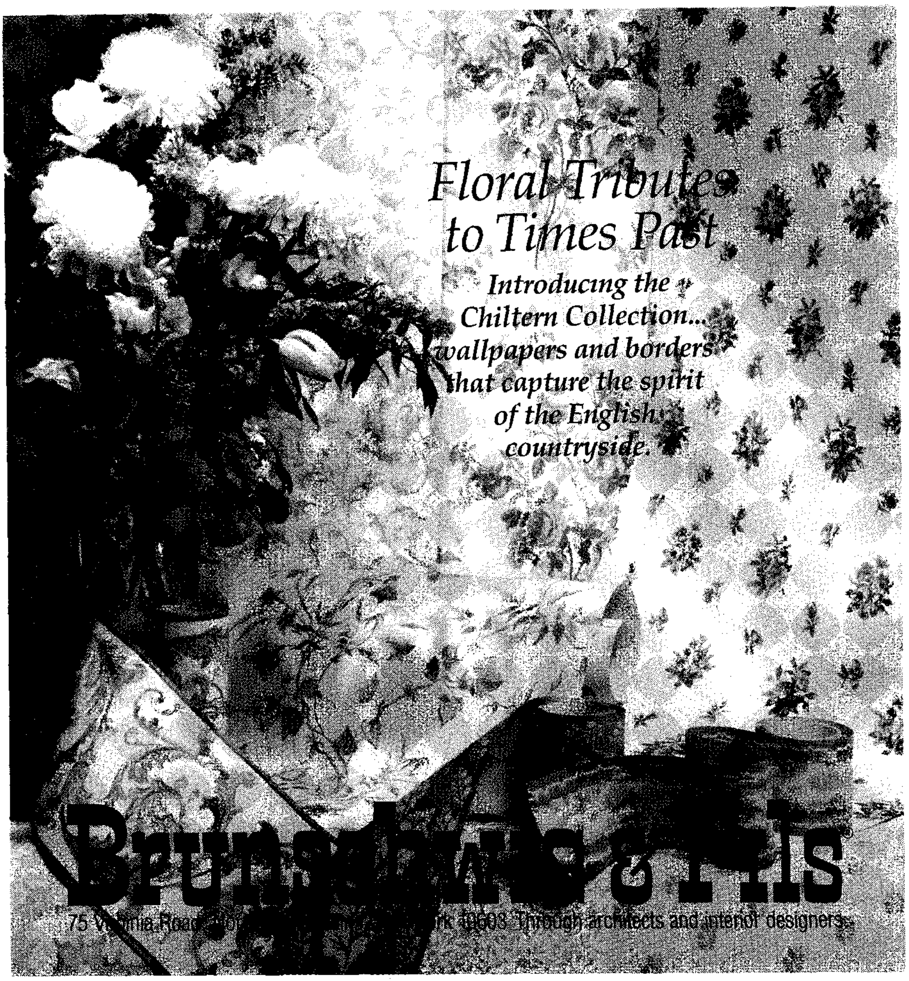
"How long would it take?" I said. "Before I could stop teaching and get my pension."

"Thirty-five years," said Arnaud. "I'll ask my mother. She had no training, either, but she taught private classes. All you need is a decent background and some recommendations."

Wait till Papa hears this, I thought. He had imagined everything possible, even that she had been the paid mistress of a Romanian royal.

Arnaud said a strange thing then: "You would have all summer long for your art. I would never stand in your way. In fact, I would do everything to help. I would mind the children, take them off your hands."

In those days men did not mind



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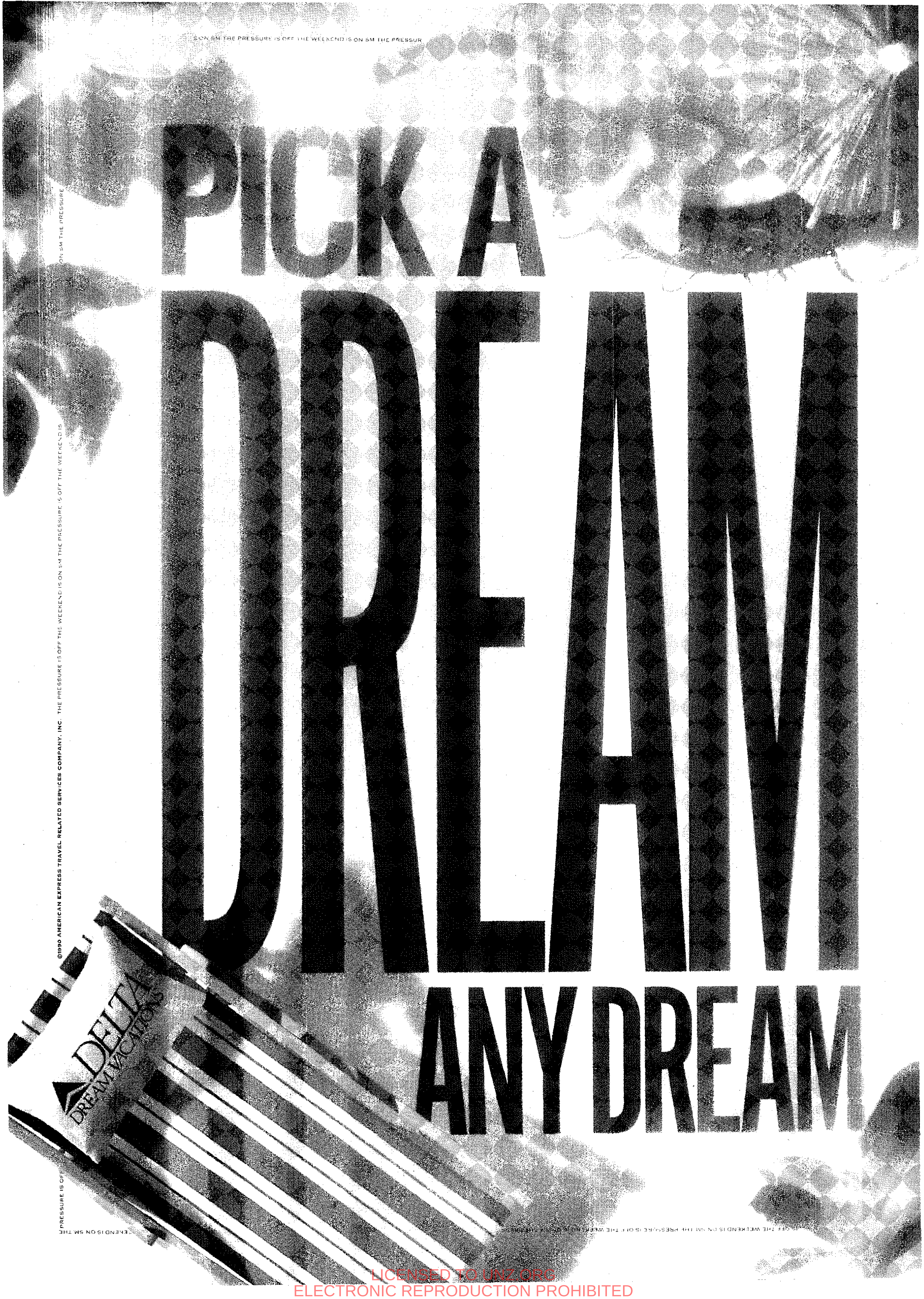
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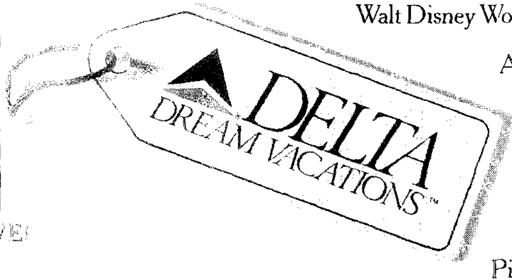

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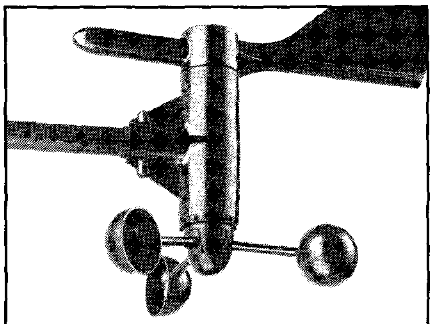

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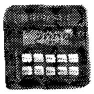

children. I had never in my life seen a married man carrying a child except to board a train or at a parade. I was glad my father hadn't heard. I think I was shocked: I believe that, in my mind, Arnaud climbed down a notch. More to the point, I had not touched a brush or drawing pencil since the day my mother had read the letter from Bernard—the important one. Perhaps if I did not paint and draw and get stains on my hands and clothes Arnaud would be disappointed. Perhaps, like Maman, he wanted to be able to say that everything hanging on the walls was mine. What he had said about not standing in my way was unusual, certainly; but it was kind, too.

We stood up and he shook and then folded his coat, holding the newspaper under his arm. He pulled his gloves out of his coat pocket, came to a silent decision, and put them back. He handed me the newspaper, but changed his mind: he would work the crossword puzzle on the way back to Rennes. By the end of the day, I thought, he would have travelled some eight hours and have missed a Sunday-afternoon concert, because of me. He started to say goodbye at the gate, but I wanted to see him board the train. A special platform ticket was required: he hesitated until I said I would buy it myself, and then he bought it for me.

From the step of the train he leaned down to kiss my cheek.

I said, "Shall I let it grow back?"

"What?"

"My hair. Do you like it short or long?"

He was unable to answer, and seemed to find the question astonishing. I walked along the platform and saw him enter his compartment. There was a discussion with a lady about the window seat. He would never grab or want anything he had no claim on, but he would always establish his rights, where they existed. He sat down in the place he had a right to, having shown his seat reservation, and opened the paper to the puzzle. I waited until the train pulled away. He did not look out. In his mind I was on my way home.

I was not quite sure what to do next, but I was certain of one thing: I would not call Papa. Arnaud had not called his family, either. We had behaved like a real couple, in a strange city, where we knew no one but each other. From the moment of his arrival until now we had not been separated; not once. I decided I would walk home. It was a long way, much of it uphill once I crossed the river, but I would be moving along, as Arnaud was moving with the train. I would be accompanying him during at least part of his journey.

I began to walk, under a slight, not a soaking, drizzle, along the boulevard, alongside the autumn trees. The gray clouds looked sculptured, the traffic lights unnaturally bright. I was sitting on a sandy beach somewhere along the Basque coast. A red ribbon held my long hair, kept it from blowing across my face. I sat in the shade of a white parasol, upon a striped towel. My knees were drawn up to support my sketch pad. I bent my head and drew my children as they dug holes in the sand. They wore white sun hats. Their arms and legs were brown.

By the time I reached the Invalides the rain had stopped. Instead of taking the shortest route home, I had made a wide detour west. The lights gleamed brighter than ever as night came down. There were yellow streaks low in the sky. I skirted the little park and saw old soldiers, survivors of wars lovingly recalled by Cousin Gaston and Papa, sitting on damp benches. They lived in the veterans' hospital nearby and had nothing else to do. I turned the corner and started down toward the Seine, walking slowly. I still had a considerable distance to cover, but it seemed unfair to arrive home before Arnaud; that was why I had gone so far out of my way. My parents could think whatever they liked: that he had taken a later train, that I had got wet finding a taxi. I would never tell anyone how I had travelled with Arnaud, not even Arnaud. It was a small secret, insignificant, but it belonged to the true life that was almost ready to let me in. And so it did; and, yes, it made me happy.

—MAVIS GALLANT

•

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[*Calvin Ahlgren in the San Francisco Chronicle*]

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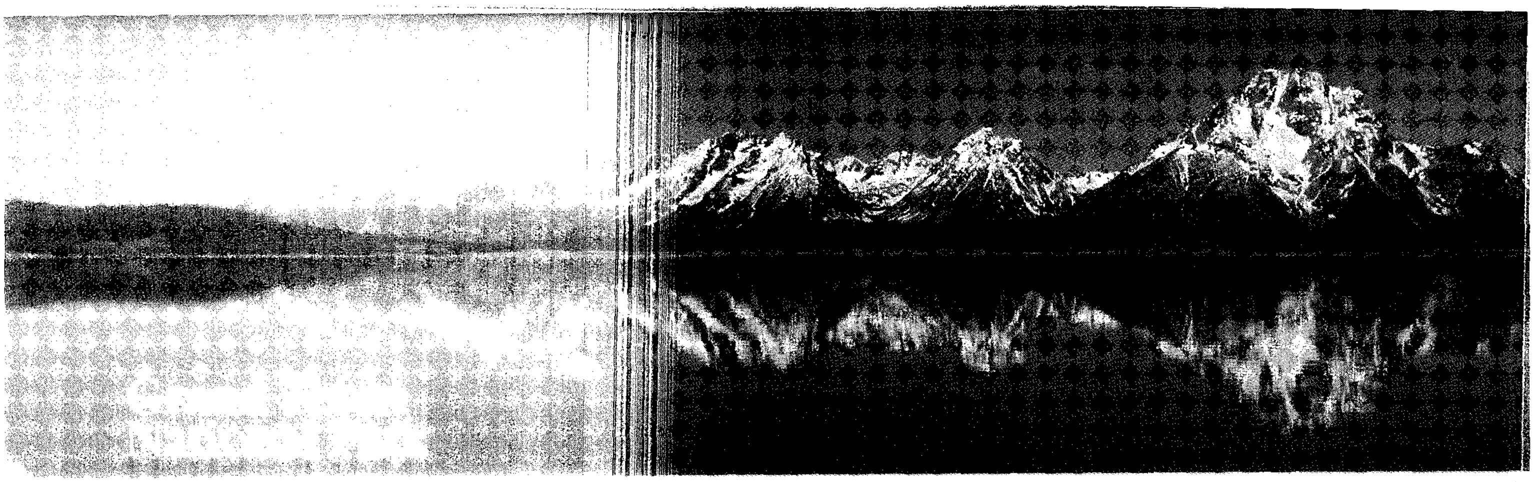
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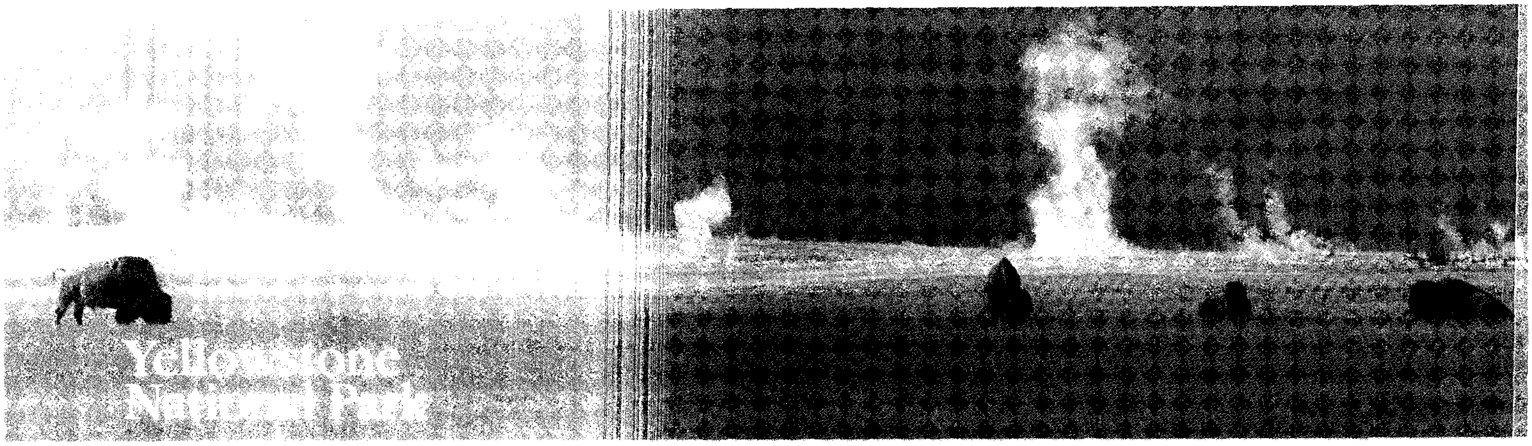
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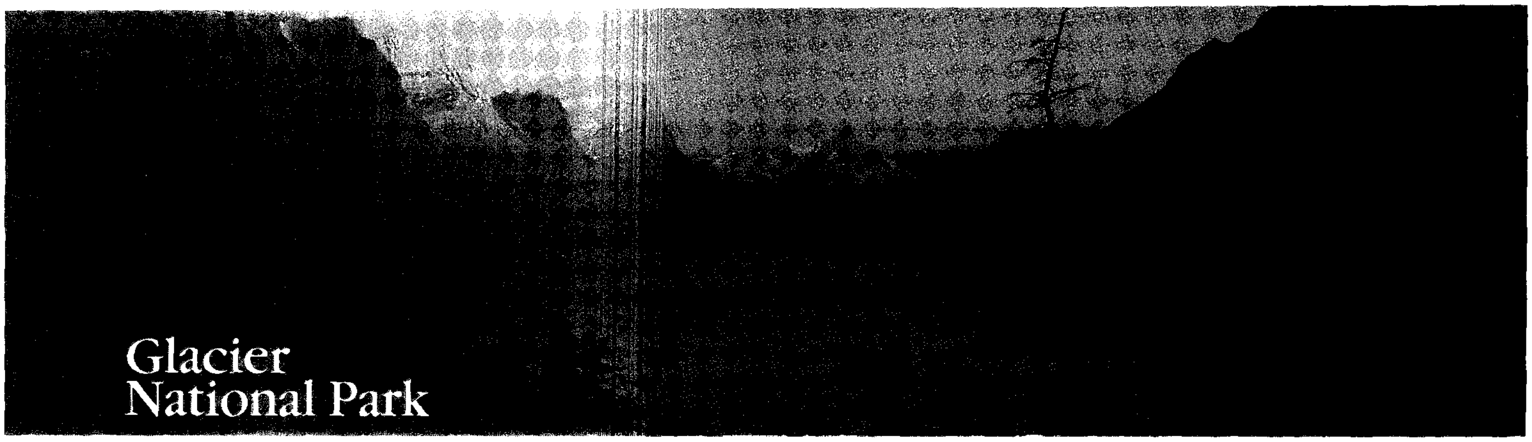
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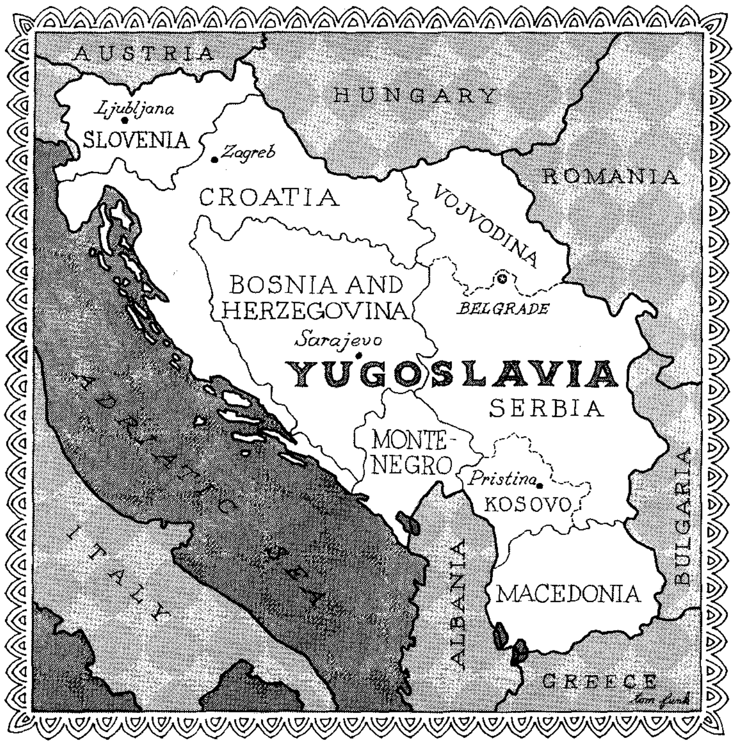
A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE YUGOSLAV IDEA

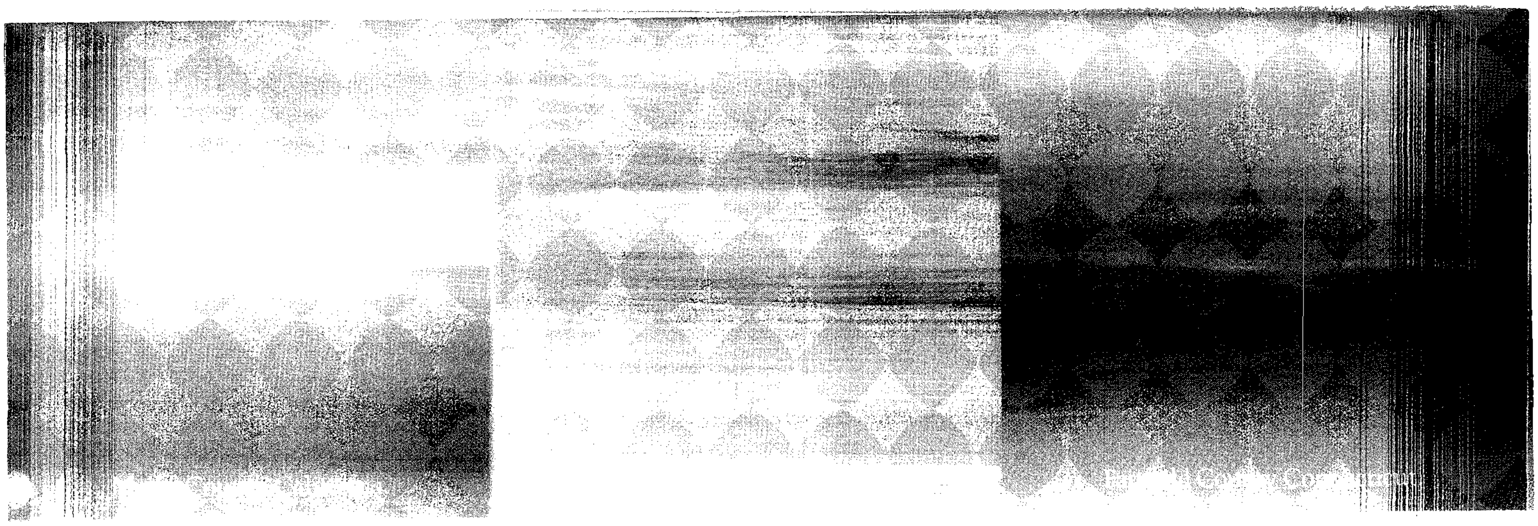


St. Mark's Church in Zagreb, the capital of the Yugoslav republic of Croatia, is much like a thousand other Gothic churches in Europe, except for a gaudy roof of multicolored tiles arranged in intricate designs, the grandest of them a depiction of the checkerboard coat of arms of the medieval Kingdom of Croatia. Near the church are the remains of six-hundred-year-old ramparts that once safeguarded Zagreb's Upper Town. St. Mark's sits in the middle of a quadrangle formed by the old Town Hall, the Croatian Assembly, noble stone mansions of the early Croatian bourgeoisie, and the palace of the governors—known as *bans*—who ruled Croatia for centuries on behalf of the Hapsburg monarchy. (The palace is now the seat of the Croatian Prime Minister.) Within the quadrangle, the townsfolk once held their markets and their fairs and conducted their social life. There, on a balmy evening last July, I joined three or four hundred Croats who had gathered for a ceremony celebrating Croatia's status as a "sovereign" republic, with the right to secede from Yugoslavia and to establish any relationship it saw fit with the other republics and provinces of the current Yugoslav federation.

The ceremony—a rather simple one—began with patriotic music played by an oompah band made up of a dozen men in red Santa-style caps and short blue jackets decorated with silver braid. The spectators sang along with the anthemlike melodies, holding their hands over their hearts. Teen-age boys who had climbed onto a scaffold partly obscuring the church waved tiny red-white-and-blue Croatian flags. Young mothers held babies in their arms. Some of the spectators were eating ice-cream cones. No one was aggressive; in fact, everyone was remarkably polite. I found the atmosphere more like that of a Rotary Club picnic than what I had expected to encounter at a political demonstration in the Balkans. The ceremony's high point was the solemn lowering of the Socialist Croatian flag—a tricolor banner with a red star in the center—and the raising of a flag that was exactly the same except that the Croatian coat of arms took the place of the star. The flag-raising was followed by a few speeches at the door of the Assembly, which is behind St. Mark's. I was unable to get close enough to have a good look at the speakers or hear what they said (no one had thought to provide a loudspeaker), but in the newspaper the next morning I saw a photograph of Croatia's leaders—they had been elected the preceding April, in the republic's first free election of the postwar era—in the Assembly doorway, smiling deliriously, hands raised and fingers spread in the V-for-victory sign. Nothing in their faces reflected the gravity of an occasion that might well contribute to the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and perhaps to civil war.

The whole affair, speeches and all, lasted less than half an hour, after which the oompah band marched off, in some disarray. Much of the crowd drifted away as soon as the music stopped, but a few dozen stragglers remained standing beneath a balcony of the Assembly's annex, where the leadership has its offices. Four men in dark suits stood on the balcony, waving and smiling, and looking as though they did not quite know what to do. After a moment or two, one of them, taller and slimmer than the rest, ducked inside and emerged carrying a piece of sculpture about the size of a six-pack. He was, I later learned, Zarko Domljan, the Assembly's new President. As nearly as I could tell, the sculpture was of a horseman holding a sword, and when Domljan lifted it above his head the little group below the balcony cheered. I had by that time acquired a smattering of the local history, and I assumed that the equestrian was Tomislav I, who founded the first Croatian kingdom after freeing the region from the Byzantines in the tenth century and whose name appears on taverns and public buildings throughout the city.

By chance, I had an appointment the next morning with Domljan, in his office. The sculpture was now sitting on his mantel, and he was quick to correct my historical guesswork. The horseman, he said, was Baron Josip Jelacic, a *ban* who, in return for a Hapsburg promise of Croatian autonomy, helped to suppress Hungary's democratic revolution in 1848. Though the Hapsburgs reneged on their promise, Croats esteem Jelacic as a patriot, and for many decades his statue—of which the sculpture was a miniature—stood in the principal square of Zagreb's modern Lower Town. When the Communists came to power, after the Second World War, they removed it, on the ground that Jelacic was a counter-revolutionary, but, Domljan said, under Croatia's new government it was to be returned to its original site, as a



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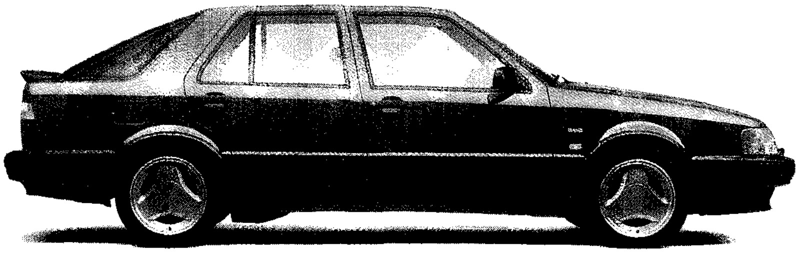
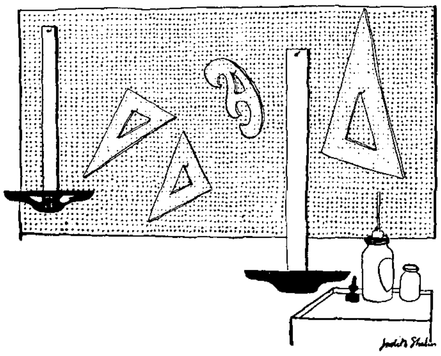


symbolic comeuppance for the Communists.

I asked Domljan why the Croats, in these democratic times, chose as a hero a man whose fame rested on his suppression of a democratic movement. He shrugged. "It's a paradox, I know," he answered, "but our history isn't always so logical." A more disturbing paradox, he said, was that the Croats were awarded their first modern state by the Nazis, during the war. It was formed by the Ustashe—right-wing fanatics who killed thousands of their opponents, mostly Serbs, in their zest for an independent Croatia. "The Croats are ashamed of the Ustashe state, and we have repudiated it," Domljan said. "It committed crimes during the war—crimes that cannot be defended. But Croats were not happy during the decades that followed, either, when we wore the grim face of Communism. When Communism began to disintegrate, many of us, remembering the Ustashe, feared the return of nationalist fervor. But we have learned a lot from our history, and now we rejoice in our national state. I think we have lived down the shame of the Croatia of 1941 to 1945. What we understand now is that we are one of the oldest peoples in Europe, and that we are unlike other peoples in the Balkans. We have a West European, Roman Catholic tradition. After six centuries of domination by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, we did not want to be anything but Croats."

Croatia is one of six republics that make up Yugoslavia, a country of twenty-four million people whose tradition of internecine bickering has forged a set of political relationships described as "the despair of tidy minds." The name Yugoslavia means Land of the South Slavs, a reference to the peoples—culturally distinct from the West Slavs (Poles, Czechs, and Slovaks) and the East Slavs (Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians), and culturally distinct from each other as well—who settled in the region in the early Middle Ages. The largest of the republics is Serbia, with a population of ten million. Croatia, with less than five million people, is a distant second. The republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (usually known simply as Bosnia) has a population of over four million, made up of both Serbs and Croats, some of whom converted to Islam under the Ottoman occupation and are designated as "Muslims" in the Yugoslav lexicon. Slovenia—the northernmost republic, and even more West European in outlook than Croatia—and Macedonia, in the south, have a little under two million people each, and Montenegro is the smallest, with a population of six hundred thousand. Living within these republics are several dozen ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities, their rights and privileges laid out by law. Since its founding, after the First World War, Yugoslavia has been tormented by ethnic antagonisms. During the Second World War, the Nazis not only established a quisling state in Croatia but distributed parcels of Yugoslav territory to Italy and to their Balkan allies, as part of a deliberate policy of dismemberment. Appealing to ancient rivalries, they recruited military units throughout the country to fight for them, mostly against the rising Yugoslav Resistance. They turned the Ustashe loose to kill, deport, or convert to Roman Catholicism the Serbs, who are Eastern Orthodox. (Jews and Gypsies were not offered the conversion option.) Under the Germans, the animosity that Yugoslavs already felt toward one another erupted into a brutal civil war.

The Yugoslav Resistance was itself divided: one segment—the Chetniks, under Draza Mihailovic—was loyal to the Serbian constitutional monarchy, which had ruled the country since 1918; the other, under Josip Broz Tito, was loyal to the Communists. Born in 1892 to a Croat father and a Slovene mother, Tito had been the Party's secretary-general, working underground in the prewar years. When the Germans invaded, he organized a guerrilla army called the Partisans, which ultimately grew to half a million strong. Tito recruited men from every part of the country, without regard to ethnicity, and he conducted his operations with indifference to conventional regional politics. By 1945, the Partisans had liberated Yugoslavia, leaving Mihailovic and the Chetniks defeated and discredited, but the interethnic bloodshed continued after liberation. It is estimated that nearly two million Yugoslavs were killed during and immediately after the war—half of them fighting the Germans, the other half fighting one another.



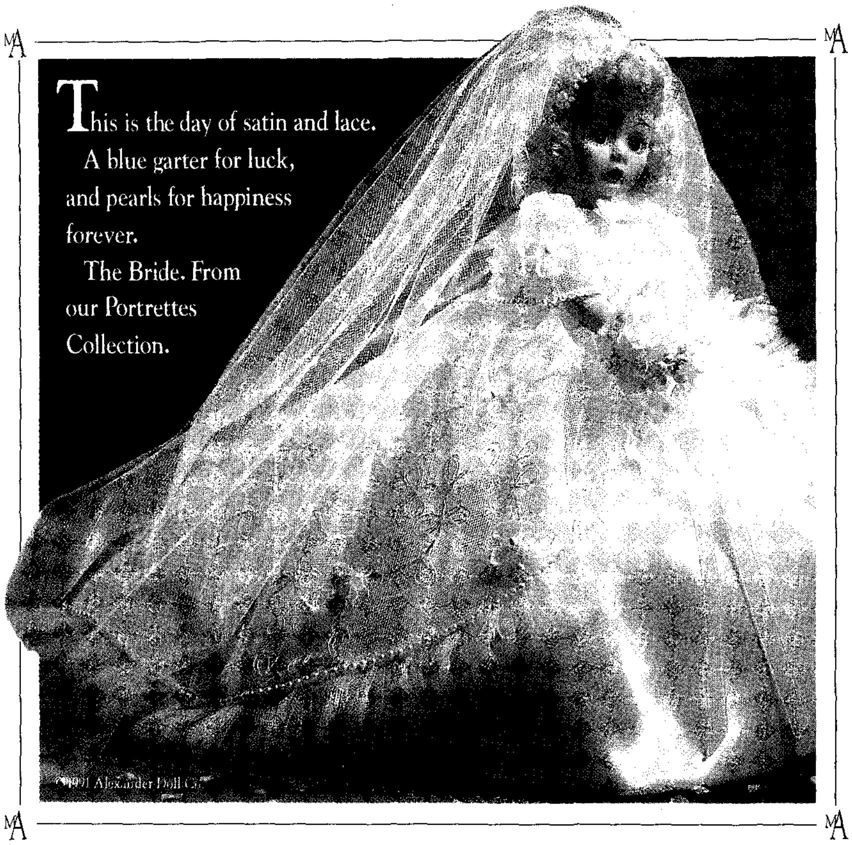
For thirty-five years—until his death, in 1980—Tito held Yugoslavia together, dominating the society through his powerful personality and his control of the machinery of the Communist Party. A patriot who refused to take orders from Stalin, he was driven out of the Communist bloc in 1948, but he remained committed to governing through the Party's highly centralized structure, which was bolstered by a pervasive police apparatus, and which he saw as a deterrent to ethnic segmentation. Tito was convinced that class loyalty, the hinge of the Communist system of values, would in time supplant the population's historic allegiance to tribalism. But he was wrong. While he was alive and controlled the institutions of repression, Tito could cover his mistake. His personal stature guaranteed him the last word, which was enough to keep the federation together, if not always in a state of harmony. Only after his death did it become clear how superficial the Party's hegemony was, and how fragile the system it administered.

"Yugoslavia was an artificial political form imposed on us against our will," Domljan told me. "It is not a nation—it is a mixture of ancient tribes, if you will. It is not just that we resented Communism. We don't want to be part of a Yugoslavia that denies us our national longing. We think of ourselves as Croats, not as Yugoslavs. We have always suspected that the very existence of Yugoslavia was a mistake, but it became more apparent to us when the Kosovo crisis intensified, in the south. That is what prompted us to work toward establishing our own state."

IF Yugoslavia disintegrates—a prospect that many consider inevitable—the Kosovo crisis will be seen as the spark that set off a chain reaction. Tito's postwar Yugoslavia was, in theory, a federation into which the six republics entered as equals. Though Serbia has forty per cent of the population, its formal powers were to be no greater than Montenegro's, with less than three per cent. Serbia's comparative disadvantage was magnified by Tito's creation of two autonomous provinces, Vojvodina and Kosovo, within its borders. Most Yugoslavs agree that Tito's aim was to limit the power of Serbia, which had dominated the country before the war. Tito justified Vojvodina's special status by citing its mixed population, which included five hundred thousand ethnic Hungarians. Kosovo's autonomy was based on a preponderance there of ethnic Albanians, but some Yugoslavs believe that it received provincial status as part of a deal Tito struck with the Communist government of neighboring Albania, to persuade it to relinquish its claims on the region, which had become part of Serbia during the Balkan Wars, early in the century.

In contrast to Serbia's generally placid relations with Vojvodina, the Serbian relationship with Kosovo has been consistently troublesome. Though it became explosive only with the collapse of Titoism, the seeds of the conflict were planted several hundred years ago. The two peoples have never meshed. Serbs are Christian, Albanians are Muslim; Serbs speak Serbo-Croatian, Albanians speak Albanian; Serbs are Slavs, Albanians are not, though their roots are obscure. The Kosovo Albanians—whose birth rate is one of the highest in Europe—currently outnumber the Kosovo Serbs by a ratio of nine to one; Albanians constitute the third-largest ethnic group in Yugoslavia. It is Yugoslavia's misfortune that Albanian nationalism came of age just as Serbian nationalism, after four decades of Tito's rule, was reasserting itself.

In most political disputes, the contending parties agree on a foundation of facts, but in the case of Kosovo the Albanians and the Serbs agree on almost nothing—not even the most fundamental events of history. The Albanians claim to be direct descendants of the Illyrians, who settled the eastern Adriatic about 1300 B.C. The Serbs dismiss the Illyrian kinship as a fabrication, and hold that Albanians migrated from the Peloponnesus, well after the Slavs arrived. Serbs call Kosovo the cradle of Serbia, pointing to a string of medieval Serbian monasteries there as evidence of their rootedness in the land. Albanians say that the monasteries were never more than outposts of a Serbian monarchy whose seat was



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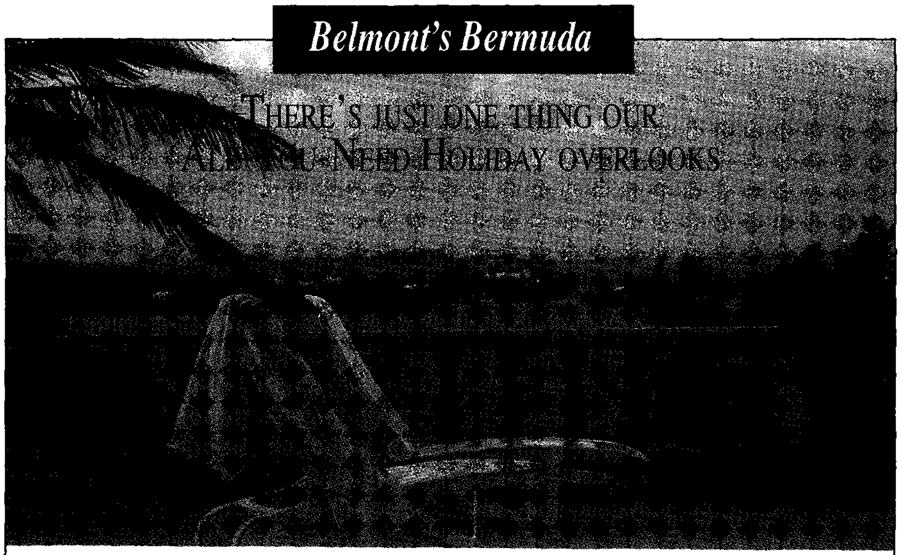

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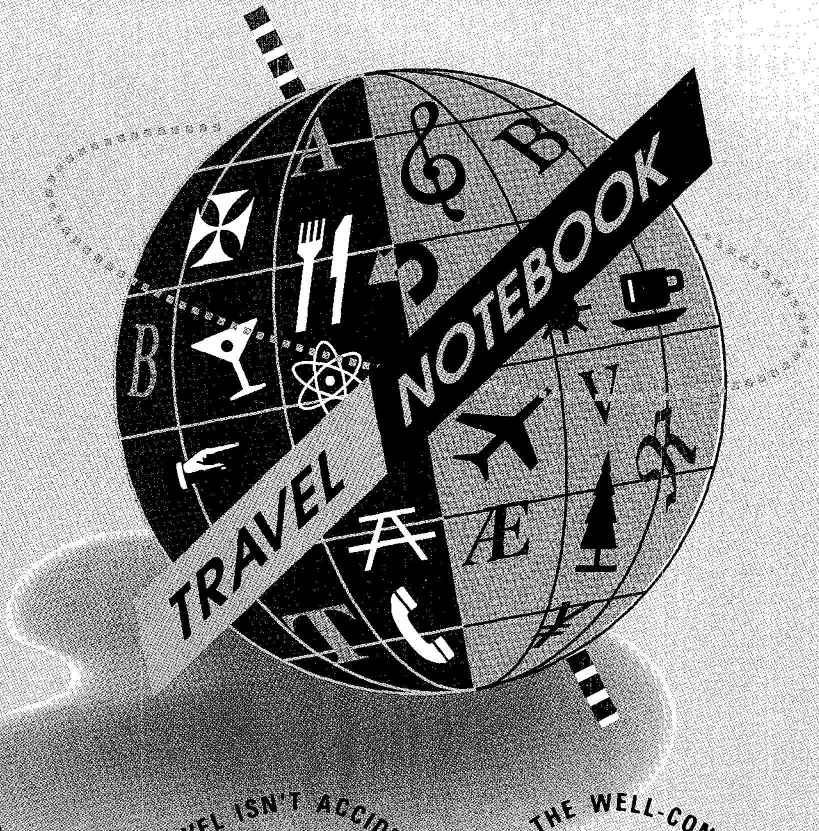

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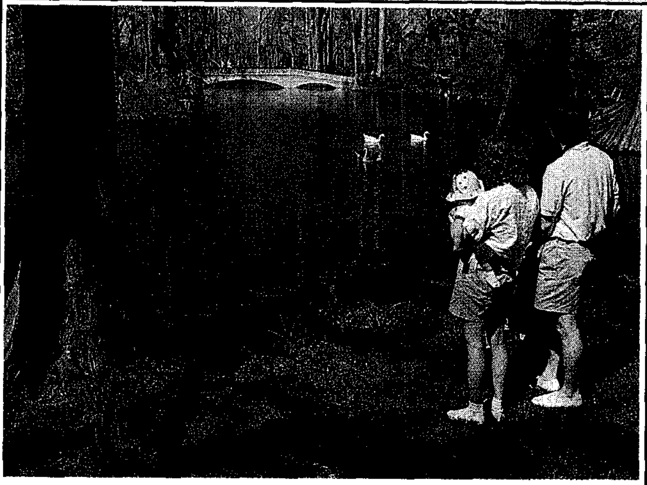

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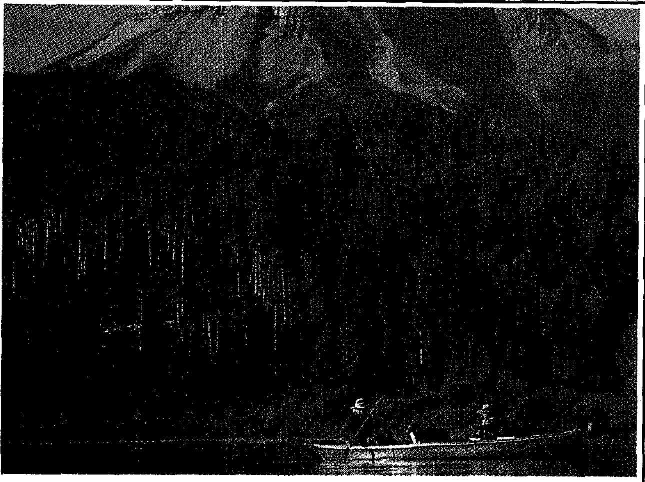

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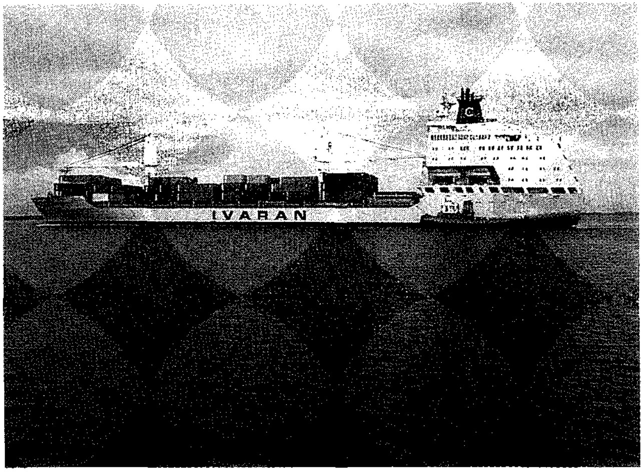

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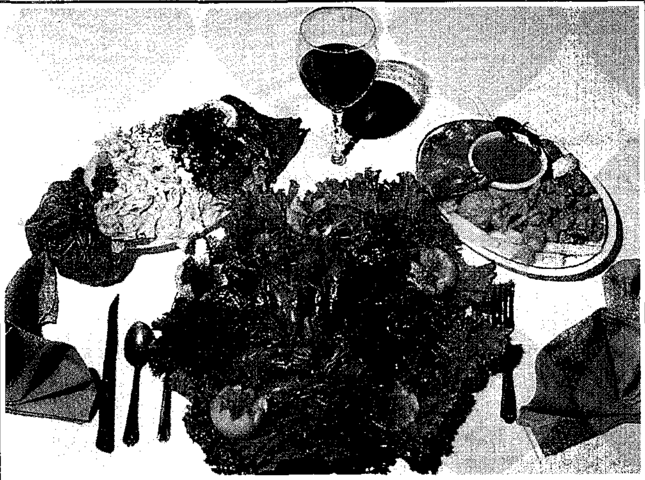

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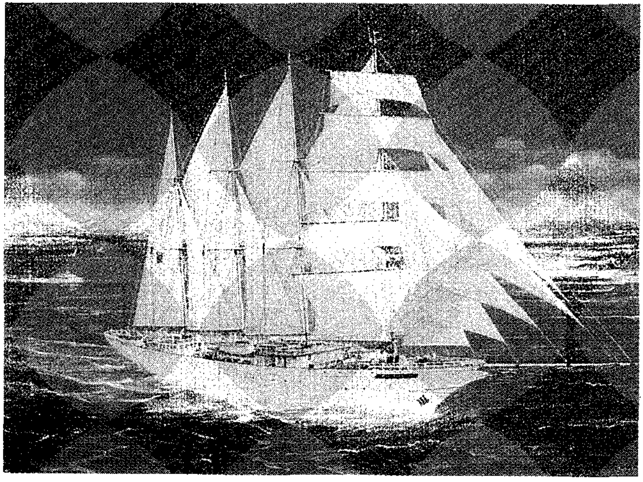

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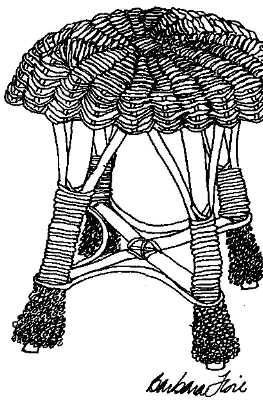
farther north. Some historians argue that the monasteries are not Serb at all but were built by the Albanians before their conversion to Islam; even most Albanians, though, consider this theory farfetched.

Whatever their historical place, the monasteries—built in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, before the conquest of the Balkans by the Ottoman Turks—are unique artistic gems. In style, they reveal Serbian Christianity's origin in Byzantium. When the Byzantine Empire went into decline, the Serbian monarchy nationalized its worship, establishing the seat of the Serbian Orthodox Church at Pec, which is today a bustling market town of veiled women and humble mosques. The old monastery at Pec is a Christian anomaly in Kosovo's Muslim world. Surrounded by a high stone wall that emphasizes its separateness, the building—actually four churches joined in a complex whose roof is a cluster of Byzantine-style domes—has only a few narrow windows, and a visitor is in near-darkness as soon as he crosses the threshold. It takes a minute or two to discern huge frescoes of robed and bearded images, painted in sombre but pure colors. These grand and awesome figures cover not only every wall but also the undersides of the domes. Most of the figures are ecclesiastical, but a few pertain to Serbian dynastic history. Within Kosovo's borders are half a dozen monasteries similar to the one at Pec. It is a tribute to the Ottomans that they preserved these Christian shrines during their centuries of occupation; it is also understandable that the Serbs do not want to give them up again.



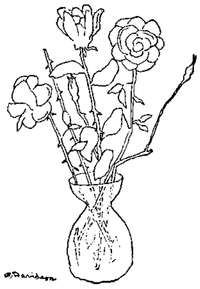
On one point Albanians and Serbs agree: the key event in Kosovo's modern history was the Battle of Kosovo Polje (Kosovo Field), in 1389, when the Ottomans defeated a Christian army and established their dominance in the region. For most of the next five centuries, southern Yugoslavia, including the bulk of Serbia, was under Ottoman rule, while the lands to the north, notably Croatia and Slovenia, were governed from Vienna by the Hapsburgs. The frontier, though unstable, separated two empires and two cultures—one Eastern and Islamic, the other Western and Roman Catholic. The Serbian church survived the battle, but the Serbian state did not; somewhat perversely, the Serbs mark June 28th, the anniversary of their defeat, as their national day. The Albanians point out that they, too, fought the Turks at Kosovo Polje, and they resent the commandeering of the event by the Serbs for their own national ends.

In the seventeenth century, the Serbs of Kosovo began a migration northward that has lasted until our own time, most of the migrants settling beyond the Danube, in the Hapsburg Empire. The Albanians, however, remained, having embraced the religion of their conquerors. Why the Albanians, almost alone of the Ottomans' Christian subjects, adopted Islam is not clear. There is no evidence of forced conversion; at most, the Turks offered converts financial and social rewards. A crucial factor, no doubt, was that the Albanians had no church of their own. Most were Roman Catholic, at a time when the Ottomans saw Rome as their principal enemy. Albanians explain the conversion by saying that until Kosovo Polje the Serbian monarchy had applied heavy pressure on their forebears to adopt the Eastern Orthodox rite, and that their ancestors, unwilling to give in, must have been relieved to get out from under Serbian rule, even if it meant turning Muslim. Unlike the Serbs, the Turks did not try to destroy Albanian traditions—or, indeed, Albanian tribal law, some of which is observed today.

"We came to consider ourselves Ottoman and we identified with Islam," an Albanian historian in Kosovo told me. "Few Turks ever had to come to Kosovo—we held the Serbs at bay for them. And so our rivalry with Serbia grew. Living side by side, we and the Serbs developed a similar culture, but they never forgave us for abandoning Christianity, and they pour out their anti-Muslim feelings on us. The Serbian Orthodox Church boasts of Serbia's role in stopping the advance of 'the dark culture,' by which it means Islam. Its outlook is narrow and provincial, and as Communism has declined that cast of mind has grown more powerful, promoting an angry Serbian nationalism."

It was the Albanians, however, who touched off a renewal of ancient animosities. Shortly after Tito's death, university students in Pristina, Kosovo's capital, issued the first challenge to the order he had established: with strong popular support, they took to the streets, defiantly chanting "Kosovo Republic"—a slogan that expressed their dissatisfaction with the autonomy the province enjoyed and their determination to gain a status in the federation equal to that of the Serbs. But the Serbs were unsure where Albanian demands would end. Did the Albanians of Kosovo plan to secede from Yugoslavia altogether? Did they intend to take with them some hundreds of thousands of the federation's Albanians living in Macedonia and Montenegro? Could their secret agenda be to unite with Albania—to create a Greater Albania, which Kosovo would likely dominate? Believing the worst, the Serbs chose to give no ground. The federation's security forces, which are preponderantly Serbian, put down the demonstrations with great brutality, and kept the peace in Kosovo in the ensuing years by the expedient of imprisoning thousands of Albanian dissidents.

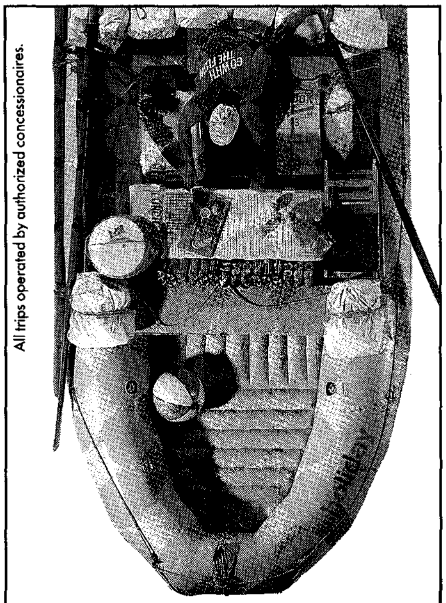
In 1989, Slobodan Milosevic, who had recently been elected the leader of the Serbian Communist Party, broke the uneasy calm. Milosevic, more than anyone else, is regarded as the man who started Yugoslavia on the road to disintegration. Born in 1941 of Serbian and Montenegrin parents, he had been transformed from a faceless apparatchik by winning the favor of the president of the Serbian Communist Party and by marrying well. His wife is a professor of Marxism at Belgrade University and runs the Serbian Party machine there. (Belgrade is Serbia's capital, as well as the capital of Yugoslavia.) Milosevic had studied law, done a stint in industry at the State Gas Works, and served as a director of the largest of the federation's banking combines before winning a seat on the Party committee of Belgrade. In 1987, using this seat as a base, he wrested the leadership of the Serbian Party away from his mentor, whom he accused of being soft on Albanians. Milosevic understood before others did that Marxism-Leninism was dying, and that the salvation of the Party lay in a shift back to old-style Balkan sectarianism. A fiery stump speaker, he built up a huge and devoted personal following, something unknown in Yugoslavia since Tito's time. As Party leader, he acquired virtually total control over the Serbian press and television stations, which routinely distorted the news to promote his political interests. Having pledged an end to Albanian dominance in Kosovo, he rammed a series of constitutional amendments through the complex legal channels of the Party and the republic to effectively restore Serbian rule over Kosovo and Vojvodina. Ever since the passage of the amendments, on March 28, 1989, the Kosovo Albanians have been on the edge of rebellion, their immediate objective no longer a republic of their own but the restoration of the autonomy that Milosevic snatched away.



In January of last year, Serbian police fired tear gas and water cannons at some forty thousand students and workers who were demonstrating peacefully on Pristina's streets. The demonstration thereupon turned into rioting, which spread to cities all over the province. Ethnic clashes—some armed, some unarmed—continued in Kosovo through early February, leaving two dozen or more Albanians dead and nearly a hundred injured. On the eve of March 28th, the first anniversary of Milosevic's amendments, I made the four-hour drive from Belgrade to Pristina, having heard widespread predictions of impending disorder. Milosevic, with calculated insensitivity, had made the anniversary a holiday throughout the republic. For the Serbs, his constituency, the day was one of jubilation, commemorating the restoration of the unity of the Serbian nation, but for the Albanians it was a day of grieving. As they saw it, Milosevic was rubbing their noses in defeat.

Nevertheless, Pristina, a city of about two hundred and ten thousand, proved to be rather relaxed. Hardly a prepossessing place, it was, for the most part, newly built, to accommodate an explosive rise in the population. Over the years, the federation had poured development funds into Kosovo, in an attempt to deal with the social unrest and chronic unemployment there. Much of the money, foreseeably, was lost to corruption and Party boondoggles, but among the achievements was a new city center, built along a wide boulevard closed to vehicular traffic in the daytime to serve as a pedestrian mall. On both sides were clusters of retail shops, stocked with generally shoddy merchandise of limited variety; between the clusters were Bauhaus-style buildings, from which Communist bureaucrats governed the province. The streets radiating from the mall were lined for a mile or so with blocks of high-rise apartment buildings, nearly all of them faced with the depressing gray concrete that characterizes mass housing in Eastern Europe. On a hill overlooking the east end of the mall was Pristina University, a surprisingly audacious agglomeration of futuristic architectural forms. I had been told in Belgrade that the students would be demonstrating on the anniversary day, but instead of carrying protest placards the students I saw were laden with books and loitering about the campus in a fashion that conveyed no sense of impending strife. At each intersection along the mall were squads of policemen—backed by Army units at the city gates—keeping watch. But the strollers on the boulevard barely seemed to notice them. Though it was the Muslim month of Ramadan, when fasting is required from dawn to dusk, the coffee shops were busy. By noon, it was apparent that there would be no story on Pristina's streets.

"We decided to protest today by not protesting," an Albanian named Veton Suroi explained to me later in the day. Suroi was the spokesman for what have come to be called "the alternative groups." I found him at an outdoor ice-cream parlor, surrounded by followers, most of them of college age. Suroi himself is only in his late twenties; the son of a diplomat, he has lived abroad and speaks excellent English. He told me that he had been a columnist for the local daily until his writings earned him expulsion from the Kosovo Communist Party, which was now dominated by Serbs and which owned the newspaper. He had dark eyes and a well-trimmed black beard, and he spoke through clenched teeth; the over-all effect was one of Leninlike steeliness. "The only way you can overthrow a regime that feeds on violence—which is what the Serbs have created here—is to deny them the chance to use vio-



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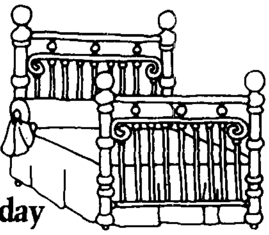

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lence," he said. "The Serbs want an excuse to crack down on us. Look at how many of us they have killed so far this year. We decided we did not want anyone killed today, in a demonstration that would only serve them." Suroi's words could have been the rationalization of a weak position, but he made a plausible case: with Yugoslavia moving toward democracy, he said, Kosovo's Albanians could use the ballot box to reverse Serbia's power grab.

That evening, I paid a call on Ibrahim Rugova, the president of the Democratic Alliance, which was founded in 1989 to challenge the Kosovo Communist Party. At the time of my visit, the Alliance claimed a membership of three hundred and fifty thousand—a figure that is since said to have doubled. Rugova, a professor of Albanian literature at the university, is generally regarded as the ideological leader of the "alternative" movement. I had heard him spoken of in Belgrade as a dark and evil force, stirring up the masses; in person, he seemed a rather innocuous fellow. Tall and skinny, with bad teeth and long, stringy hair, he looked like Hollywood's version of a prewar East European intellectual, and he seemed, at forty-four, older than his years. He and his family lived on the seventh floor of a small, shabby apartment in one of the concrete high rises. I reached the apartment by the stairs, since the elevators were broken. Rugova told me that they were always broken. He was unshaven and wore a dirty maroon sweater and a pair of corduroy slacks. In a room furnished with threadbare easy chairs, a shaggy rug, and dusty stacks of books and newspapers, we talked over soft drinks and a plate of salty local cheese and fresh scallions.

"The Serbs see our movement as territorial nationalism," Rugova informed me, in French. Having studied in Paris, he said, he preferred to speak with me in that language. "But we see it as a search for a stronger national identity. In these troubled times, our people are afraid they will lose even the minimum guarantee of their culture—their language and their schools. Albanians born in Yugoslavia are now two million strong. We have workers and peasants, we have created our own intelligentsia, and we want to function as a society. With further economic and social development, we will contribute to the entire country. Yet the Serbs want us to remain an isolated ethnic group. Having lost our autonomy, we are now simply asking for honest political dialogue—to work out our future. But Serbs don't like to talk; they'd rather fight."

Mild though Rugova's words sounded, I could not say that I blamed the Serbs for mistrusting them. When the Albanians began their political agitation, a decade ago, they had all the attributes of a republic except the name. Now they had much less. Were they deliberately misrepresenting their goals? Was it possible that they did not acknowledge even to themselves the political dénouement toward which their campaign was moving? On the other hand, as an outsider I had difficulty—at least, at first—understanding why the Serbs regarded Kosovo's status as worth the risk of wrecking the entire structure of the Yugoslav federation. In time, I came to learn that the Serbs have a special conception of the federation, different not only from that of the Albanians but from that of all the other peoples with whom they share Yugoslavia.

THE Yugoslav Idea—a vision of the kinship of the South Slavs—was born in the eighteenth century. Its early advocates were Croats and Slovenes, but during the next century, with nationalism rising all over Europe, Serbian thinkers developed the notion of kinship into the dream of a political state. The Croats and the Slovenes, as Catholics living in a Catholic empire, attached less urgency to Slavic nationhood than did the Serbs, who were Christians under Muslim rule. In 1804, the Serbs began a series of insurrections against the Ottomans, and by 1830 they had won self-governing status. Exulting in their freedom and their fighting spirit, they began to see themselves as the leaders of the South Slavs. For the Serbs, the Yugoslav Idea had become indistinguishable from the concept of a Greater Serbia.

By 1860, with the Ottoman Empire in precipitous decline, Serbia had achieved de-facto independence, and in 1882 the Kingdom of Serbia was officially proclaimed. In the ensuing decades, Serbia's triumphs served as an example to all the Balkan peoples, whose zealotry touched off a series of wars for territorial sovereignty and aggrandizement not only against the Ottomans and the Hapsburgs but against one another. In the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, Serbia formally annexed Kosovo from the Turks. The next year, Bosnian nationalists who were pledged to union with Serbia fired the shots at Sarajevo that started the First World War. Though Serbia was occupied by Austrian forces during most of the war, its Army fought gallantly on behalf of the Allies; the Croats and the Slovenes, as Hapsburg subjects, fought for the Central Powers. In the postwar negotiations, Serbia sat with the victors, who proceeded to reshape the region into the basic configuration that exists today. At the end of the war, it was taken for granted by all the South Slavs that they would have their own state, but they disagreed strongly among themselves over whether it should take

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my likely chance was growth, and so I grew.
Long days in school I filled, like a spring creek,
with boredom. Sex I discovered soon
enough, I now think. Sweet misery!

There's not enough room in a poem so curt
to get me out of adolescence, yet
I'm nearing fifty with a limp, and dread
the way the dead get stacked up like a cord
of wood. Not much of a story, is it?
The life that matter's not the one I've led.

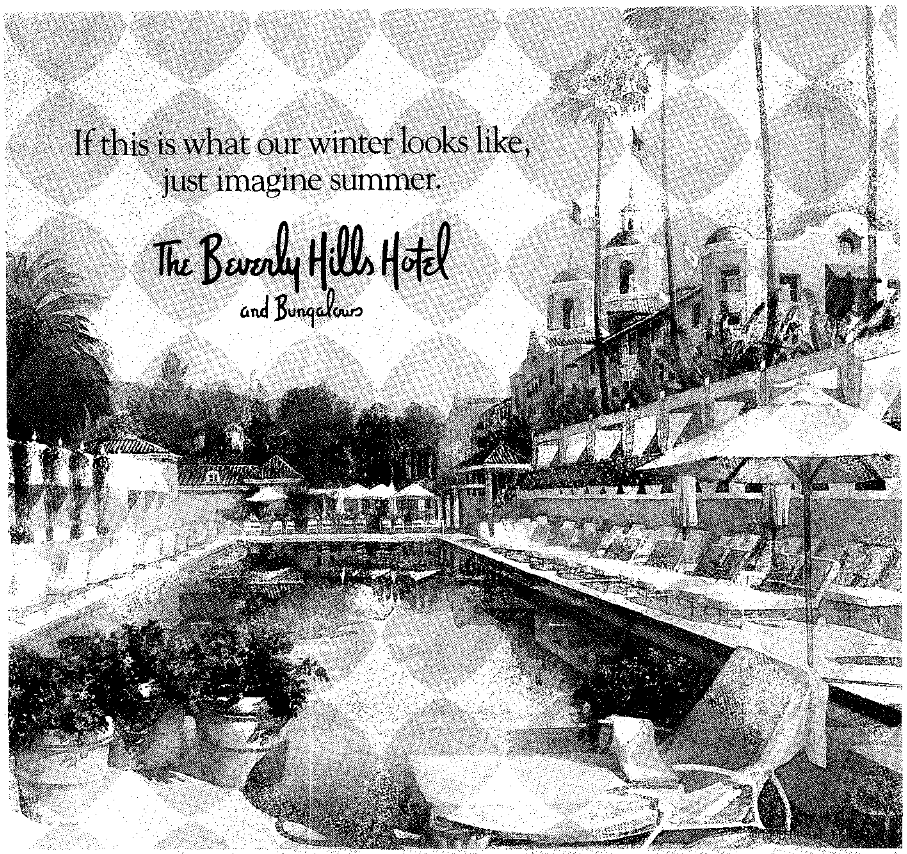
—WILLIAM MATTHEWS

• •

the form of a unitary state under the Serbian dynasty or of a federation among equals. The Albanians of Kosovo—there were fewer than four hundred thousand of them then, among ten million Slavs—were never invited into the debate, which ended with the proclamation, in 1918, of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, under the Serbian crown. Its clumsy name was a compromise, for the state that emerged was in fact Greater Serbia, and many of its non-Serb inhabitants soon realized that they had traded the Hapsburgs or the Ottomans for another oppressor.

In its first decade, the new state tried democracy, but its rifts—particularly between Serbs and Croats—were too deep for parliamentary adjudication, and by 1929 it had become a royal dictatorship, shored up by a Serbian-dominated Army. In 1929, King Alexander renamed the country Yugoslavia and wiped out the old national boundaries, but these moves only worsened relations among the ethnic groups. By the early thirties, violence was intruding routinely into the political system, and in 1934 the King was assassinated by an extremist from the Croatian Ustashe. The regent who succeeded him governed with the support of a sham parliament and dealt with Croatian nationalists and the increasingly popular Communists by mass jailings. He was considered sympathetic to Nazi Germany, and was overthrown in March, 1941. Ten days later, the Nazis invaded, and Yugoslavia, too deeply divided to put up an effective resistance, was quickly overrun. The country's experiment in constitutional monarchy had come to an end, and so had the years of Serbian preëminence.

Yugoslavs talk of the monarchist era, between the two world wars, as Yugoslavia I, and of the Communist era, from 1945 to the death of Tito, as Yugoslavia II. Since Tito's death, they have stumbled around in search of Yugoslavia III, hoping that the country will remain intact long enough for them to find it. The federal constitution of 1974, which Tito left behind to guide the transition from his personal rule to Yugoslavia III, is a political scientist's nightmare. It empowered the Party alone—on the republican and provincial as well as on the federal level—to select the people to run the state. To handle the normal affairs of state, the constitution created the office of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Prime Minister (formally known as the President of the Federal Executive Council), and bestowed on its incumbent the authority of a head of government. But it paralyzed him by establishing a bicameral legislature within which each of the constituent republics and provinces had veto powers. It was a maddening arrangement, which could be expected to function only if the Prime Minister's goal was the preservation of the status quo; a Prime Minister who wanted to get anything done was obliged to carry on endless negotiations with the constituent states, virtually guaranteeing that real change would be enacted only in desperate circumstances. The constitution also established a collective Presidency of eight members, one from each republic and province. In an annual rotation, each member serves as President of the Presidency, which is nominally the federation's highest office but has never been much more than a symbolic post. The Presidency itself can rule collectively by decree for six months if the government collapses. It also exercises command over the Yugoslav Army—a weighty power in a state that evidently stands on the brink of civil war.

In creating a permanently crippled government, Tito relied heavily on the Party for stability, but the Party was no longer a factor two years ago, when the republics and provinces, with the economy in stagnation, reached an agreement to name a liberal reformer as Prime Minister to get the country moving again. Ante Markovic, who received the nomination, was a Croatian Communist, an engineer who had pursued a career as a manager of public enterprises. Though never an apparatchik, he had been on good enough terms with the Party as a technocrat to win appointment over the years to high posts in Croatia. Only with its back against the wall was the Party willing to name him, knowing that his program was to transform Yugoslavia into a market-driven economy. In time, Markovic argued, his reforms would open the door to membership in the European Community, and to a level of prosperity equal to that of Western Europe. Meanwhile, however, he had to negotiate with local politicians to try to turn around an economy burdened by triple-digit inflation, declining income and production, and an enormous foreign debt.

It was an index of Yugoslavia's new values that Markovic's tantalizing vision of "joining Europe" was applauded in every part of the country. From Albanian peasants in Kosovo to Croatian intellectuals in Zagreb, Yugoslavs I met spoke with an almost religious zeal of union with Europe. Cvijeto Job, who holds the rank of career ambassador and is known as one of the more articulate officials in the Foreign Ministry, explained this fascination to me. Job is a Croat by birth, but when he is asked to state his nationality he says he is Yugoslav. (Only about a million others in the country officially designate themselves as Yugoslavs.) "Western Europe represents what Yugoslavs have not been in the past generation—free and prosperous," he said. "They are acknowledging that as a Communist country and a member of the Non-Aligned Movement they have been essentially cut off from major European trends. Slovenes and Croats talk of Europe as if it were their heritage—distinguishing themselves from the 'barbarian,' ex-Ottoman, ex-Byzantine Serbs. There is racism in these yearnings. On the other hand, the Serbs—along with the Albanians and the Macedonians and others in the southern part of the country—want to be a part of Europe precisely in order to affirm that they are a part of modern civilization. Talk of Europe is sloganeering—a kind of escapism that means, 'Let's enter Europe and all will be well for my troubled republic.' "

On its face, Prime Minister Markovic's task of creating a modern economy was easier than Mikhail Gorbachev's in the Soviet Union. Tito, who did not consider himself bound by a Marxist (i.e., Soviet) model, after some early experimentation eliminated central planning from the Yugoslav economy. Though industry was nationalized, agriculture was not. Private enterprise was allowed to function, though only in the economic interstices. Under Tito, the country had open borders, which not only gave Yugoslavs a taste of freedom but required of them some competitiveness with foreign manufacturers. The result was that during most of Tito's years Yugoslavia was more prosperous than its eastern neighbors. In seeking to rebuild that prosperity, Markovic insisted on choosing his own team of economic experts instead of the Party hacks who had normally been imposed on Prime Ministers. He also asked for a five-year mandate, on the ground that his reforms needed time to succeed.

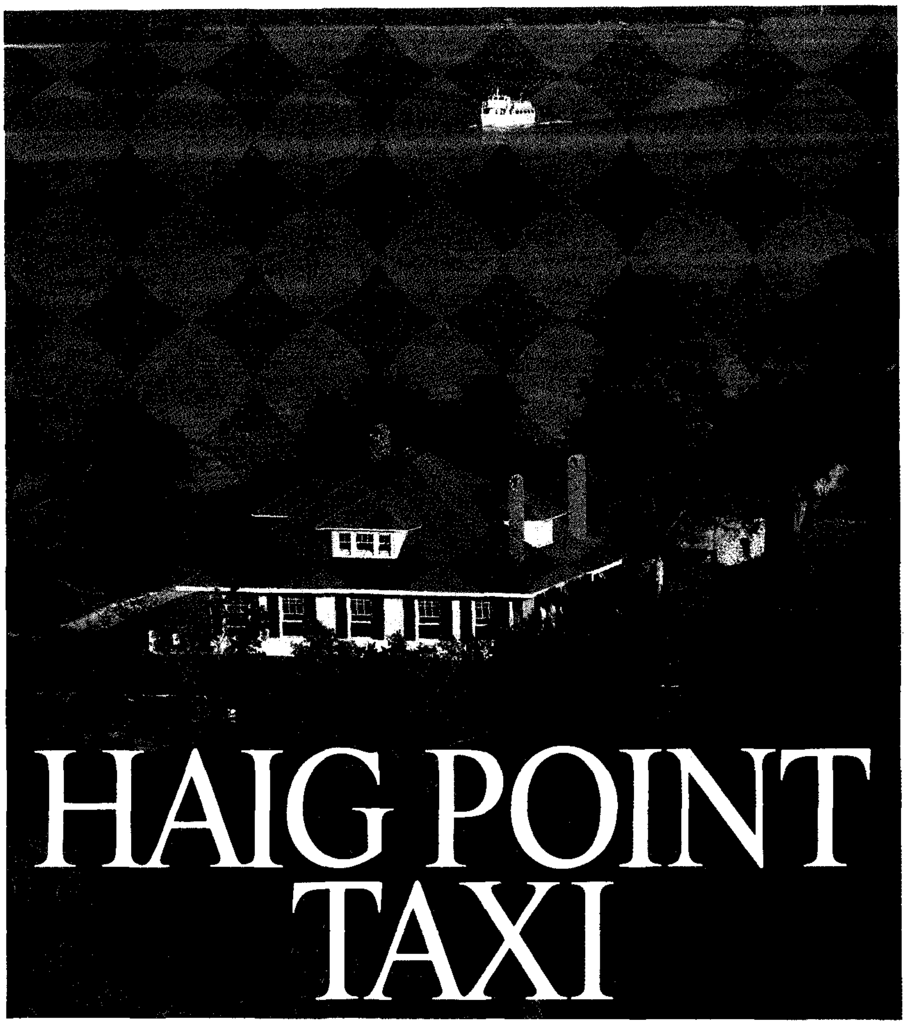
Reluctantly, the republics and provinces complied, and, to nearly everyone's surprise, the reforms began working almost immediately. By refusing to print money, by selectively freezing wages and prices, and by liberalizing imports, Markovic forced inflation down from a monthly rate of sixty-four per cent, where it stood in December of 1989, to zero by last spring. He declared the dinar a convertible currency, whereupon exports rose, the foreign debt dropped, and reserves climbed dramatically. Securities markets were established in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana, and, along with a new investment law, they brought an infusion of capital and the formation of hundreds of new businesses. Markovic still had much to do, one of his major tasks being to get rid of a horde of collectivized dead-end enterprises, but it was remarkable, given Yugoslavia's bizarre political system, that he was able to put through a reform program at all. His chief nemesis in promoting change was Slobodan Milosevic, a man with no fondness for the free market, and certainly no desire to have Serbia's state enterprises—his power base—transferred to the private sector. Though the economy by no means regained the ground it had lost in the eighties, its indisputable dynamism was a huge boost to national morale.

On my visit last summer, I watched Markovic answer questions for more than two hours on a live phone-in television show. He is an untheatrical man: occasionally, he gestured for emphasis, but he rarely smiled; his plain, undistinguished face was marked by a high forehead and a copious thatch of white hair brushed unstylishly back; and he wore an ordinary light-blue suit (perhaps just a little more modish than the baggy clothes of most Yugoslav politicians) with a bland tie. But he displayed the kind of critical intellect that had seemed absent among Communist officials for decades, and with it he dominated the proceedings, never allowing himself to be provoked by the questions, many of which were tricky and tough, and never raising his voice. He spoke in clear, comprehensible language, without notes and with an amazing mastery of figures and detail. He was generous to his supporters and gracious to his adversaries, and even after the questioning went into the third hour his stamina never flagged.

With the Communist Party in a state of collapse, Markovic had come to represent the preservation of Yugoslavia. He argued that, if his economic reforms succeeded, the restoration of prosperity to the Yugoslavs would wean them from their divisive nationalism, which he saw as a temporary reaction to the suffocating decades of Communist conformity. It was a promising theory, and Markovic was seen as courageous in tackling problems that were taboo for decades. Most Yugoslavs—with the possible exception of the Slovenes—accepted his contention that only if they remained together in one state would they have any prospect of joining Europe. But many also believed that the effort had come far too late.

Markovic, though he was cautious in the phrases he selected, let it be known that he disapproved of Serbia's divisive policies in Kosovo, and of the separatist movements in Slovenia and Croatia. He called for the strengthening of federal financial and political institutions and for the scheduling of elections to give a renewed mandate to the federal parliament. Few in Yugoslavia underestimated the strength of the forces arrayed against him: Milosevic appeared committed to the restoration of a federation dominated by Serbia; the Slovenes and Croats talked of abolishing the federal system altogether and replacing it, if at all, by a loosely bound "confederation" of republics, whose relations would be determined by treaty and conducted by diplomatic delegations. The Slovenian and Croatian governments vowed not to remain Yugoslavian unless revolutionary changes were put into effect, while the Serbian government conveyed a clear impression that it would tolerate no changes at all.

On July 29th, Markovic delivered a major address on Mt. Kozara, in Bosnia, the site of a celebrated Partisan battle in 1942. In it he announced that he would organize a new political party in time to field candidates in upcoming



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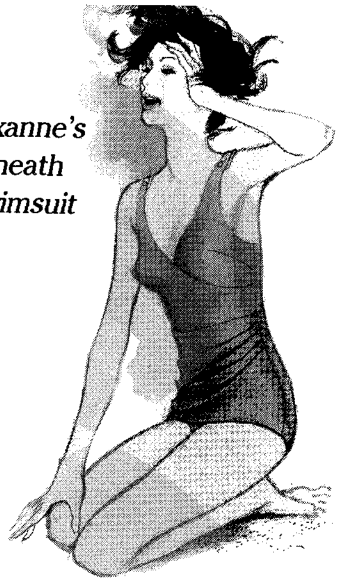

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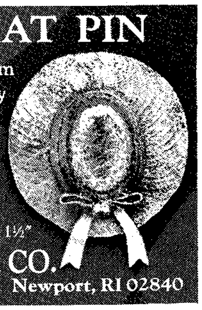

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elections in Serbia, Bosnia, Macedonia, and Montenegro. The party would be known as the Alliance of Reform Forces, and it would be dedicated to building a unified, modern Yugoslavia. Markovic was staking his political future on the federation; his move was a direct challenge to the rising tide of republican nationalism. During the fall, he travelled tirelessly among the six capitals, urging prudence on the leaders of the republics and calling for them to desist from irrevocable acts. By his account, he found willing listeners, but many Yugoslavs considered him unduly optimistic about the strength of his personal political appeal and its chances of saving the federation.

MARKOVIC has not been totally alone in urging Yugoslavs to turn away from the narrow, tribal character of their nationalism. Last spring, I attended a conference, in Pristina, of the Association for the Yugoslav Democratic Initiative (its acronym in Serbo-Croatian is UJDI, pronounced "wee-dee"), a loose union of democratic and human-rights groups from all over the country. An association of intellectuals with little popular support, it was intent on facilitating Yugoslavia's transition from Communist rule to a multiparty parliamentary system. A portrait of Tito smiled benevolently from behind the platform on some two hundred delegates, who were crowded into the hot and airless ballroom of Pristina's Grand Hotel. The Kosovo issue was at the top of the agenda. Veton Suroi and Ibrahim Rugova were there, and so were other leaders of the Albanian protest movement. Just as the proceedings were getting under way, four men stood up, identified themselves as the Committee on Truth for Kosovo, a Serbian nationalist group, and proclaimed that UJDI was betraying the country. "In this room, there is no true Yugoslav and no true Serb, and we have nothing more to say to you!" one of them shouted. The four then stomped out, much to the relief of the delegates. For the next several hours, the conference was given over to speeches, in both Albanian and Serbo-Croatian, on the repression of human rights in Kosovo. In the meantime, I had arranged a meeting in the downstairs dining room with Srdja Popovic, a Belgrade lawyer known for his advocacy of human rights. Popovic was the chairman of UJDI's Independent Commission on Kosovo, which had been established to try to bring some objectivity to the crisis.

As we sat at a table drinking coffee, Popovic spoke of UJDI's fear that Kosovo had become a formidable obstacle to Yugoslavia's transition to democracy. "Tito's chief target in promulgating the 1974 constitution was Serbia," he said. "Tito was a product of the Hapsburg Empire. This meant that he saw Serbs as troublemakers, and he believed that Serbian nationalism was the greatest threat to Yugoslavia." Tito's reforms gave Serbia's two provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina, control over their own educational, police, and court systems, and empowered them to conduct relations with foreign countries as well. Though Popovic believed that the shift was excessive, he criticized the Serbs for alarming the entire country by their heavy-handed suppression of Albanian autonomy. Their behavior, he said, had revived a historical question among Croats and Slovenes about whether it was possible for any people to live as equals with the Serbs.

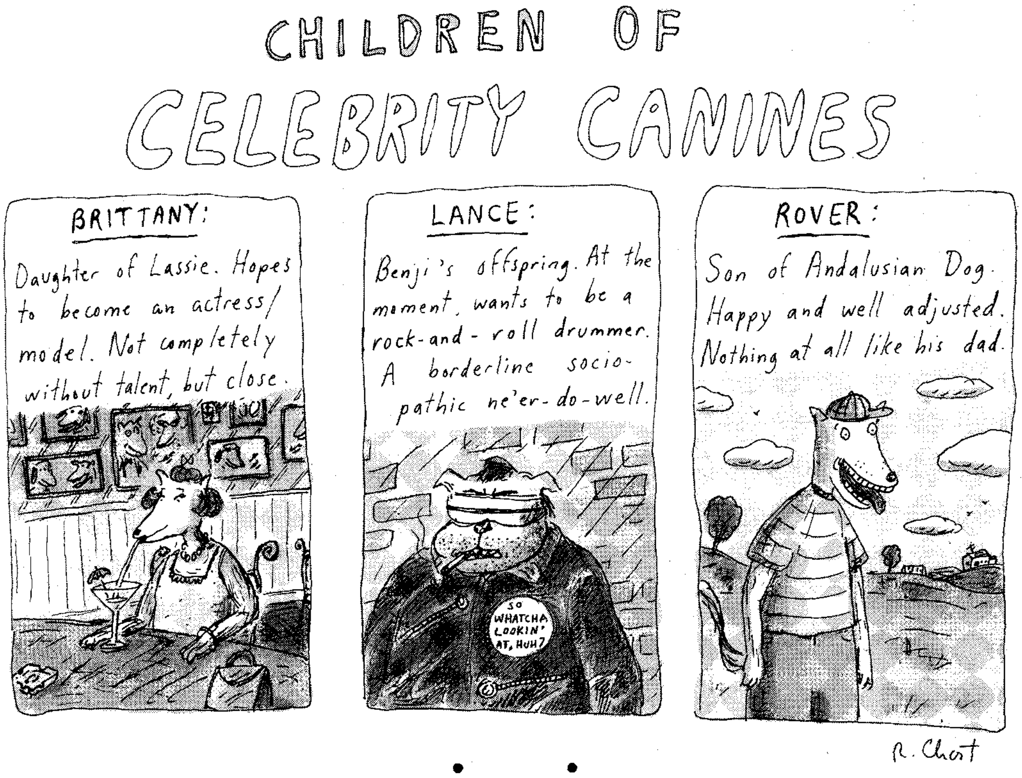
"Tito's reforms were a landmark in the formation of an Albanian nation in Kosovo," Popovic continued. "The Serbs had always held the Albanians of Kosovo in contempt. The 1974 changes were part of a process that gave the Albanians a new sense of themselves. Their schools—particularly the university—created a new class of intellectuals. They brought in textbooks and professors from Albania, in order to give their culture a more Albanian shape. The Serbs charged that they brought in arms along with the textbooks. We have no evidence of that, but it hardly matters, since Yugoslavia's Albanians already had plenty of guns. What has changed in recent years is that they have shed much of their inferiority complex and acquired an ethnic pride. Serbs were shocked by that. When Tito died, everyone in Yugoslavia began talking of rights under the constitution. It was a healthy new consciousness, but Kosovo presented special problems. Tito had deluded the Albanians of Kosovo into thinking that their power had no limits. Their assertiveness frightened the Serbs, who called for the backing of the Croats and the Slovenes, and did not get it. The repression of the Albanians offends human-rights advocates around the world, and the Serbs have come to feel isolated and misunderstood. They resent being seen as villains in the country they feel they created."

Popovic said that the Kosovo Serbs, an embattled minority, had become genuinely frightened for themselves and their families. "Milosevic was lucky, in seeking to overturn the old Serbian Communist Party leadership, to have Kosovo as a problem," he went on. "He knew that with Communism everywhere in retreat Kosovo was his best card, and he activated his propaganda machine to persuade Serbs that the Old Guard was too weak to deal with it. Milosevic's first priority is to keep himself and the Communist Party in power, and that's quite a problem, as events all over Eastern Europe have demonstrated. The only real opposition in Serbia to Milosevic's extreme nationalism is from the nice people up there"—Popovic gestured toward the ceiling—"but they are seen as traitors by most Serbs, even the Serbian intellectuals. The UJDI people have a commitment to Yugoslavia. They kept the human-rights issue alive through the long Titoist era. But Milosevic has them in a trap. By promoting freedom and democracy for Kosovo, they appear pro-Albanian and anti-Serb, and they wind up with no constituency at all. As long as the Kosovo problem exists, there is no way that Milosevic can be defeated by any democrat promoting human rights."

Paradoxically, Milosevic, while seeking to preserve the Titoist system in Serbia, was publicly dismantling the Tito cult, Popovic told me. At a recent ceremony in Belgrade, he had laid a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the First World War—a war popularly identified as Serbia's. He had appeared on television with a priest of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which had quarrelled with Tito for thirty-five years. Months passed during which he barely pronounced Tito's name—a conspicuous lapse. Milosevic's rejection of Tito, Popovic said, did not mean that he had accepted liberal values, much less human rights. On the contrary, it indicated a return to traditionalism, which in Serbia's historical memory meant nationalism. For most Serbs, Popovic said, human rights had more to do with ethnicity than with the individual. As Serbs saw it, Tito had made it all but a crime to proclaim oneself a Serb; they felt they had been denied "the right to get together with other Serbs to boast about Serbia and sing patriotic songs." Serbs were now expressing their freedom by beating on the Albanians, Popovic said, and they were clearly enjoying it.

The Kosovo crisis escalated in June, when the provincial Assembly, three-fourths of whose members were Albanians, convened for its regular session and embarked on a filibuster over Serbia's oppressive policies. Faced with the Assembly's refusal to adjourn, Milosevic pledged in a public speech to address Kosovo's grievances, and in return the delegates agreed to suspend the session for a week. A few days later, Milosevic delivered a hard-line anti-Albanian message to the Serbian Assembly, which the next day enacted a law that authorized the republic to assume full power in Kosovo and wiped out what little autonomy was left after the 1989 amendments. Milosevic also announced a referendum to authorize free, multiparty elections in Serbia but stipulated that they were to take place only after he had had a chance to write a new Serbian constitution, formalizing Kosovo's absorption into the republic's political system. The result of the referendum—after a campaign controlled by Milosevic—was 96.8 per cent in favor of this proposal. Three days later, when the Kosovo Assembly attempted to resume its debate, the members found themselves locked out. They then convened on the Assembly's front steps and passed a resolution declaring Kosovo equal to the republics in the Yugoslav federation. It was Kosovo's declaration of independence from Serbia—a "Kosovo Republic" at last. Milosevic thereupon abolished the provincial government, took over Kosovo's newspapers and broadcasting facilities, closed the offices of the Democratic Alliance, and fired all Albanian civil servants who refused to sign a loyalty oath to Serbia.

Most Yugoslavs assumed that Milosevic's strong-arm tactics would be met in Pristina by violence, but the Albanians did nothing more than call for a general strike every morning from nine to ten; these strikes, only sporadically observed, were held throughout the summer and early fall, and though talk of armed insurrection was heard with increasing frequency among Albanians, outbreaks of actual violence were few. "Violence is what Milosevic wants," Veton Suroi had explained to me last spring. "We will not lay down our lives to satisfy Milosevic. Not when, sooner or later, there must be democratic elections in Kosovo, which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we will win." Milosevic, however, was slow in setting an election date. More important, Albanians would now be voting only for seats in the Serbian Assembly—where Kosovo's interests were sure to be swamped.

THOUGH the Kosovo crisis was the first major fissure, the dismantling of the Titoist structure of government had its roots in Slovenia, which is the richest and most heavily industrialized of the Yugoslav republics, and the closest—culturally as well as geographically—to Western Europe. Slovenia's capital is Ljubljana, a city that mixes an eighteenth-century gingerbread charm with an ebullient street life. The very feel of Ljubljana seems to defy Communism's stern decorum. At its sidewalk cafés, the peculiar idea that the vehicle for overturning Communism was democracy matured during the nineteen-eighties, but even earlier Slovenia had produced germinal movements—generally student-organized—that preached feminist, environmental, pacifist, and anti-nuclear doctrines. Those movements suddenly coalesced in the spring of 1988, when the government arrested a noncommissioned Army officer and three journalists working for a radical magazine called *Mladina* ("Youth"), and charged them with stealing state secrets. The secrets, published in the magazine, were excerpts from Yugoslav Army documents which suggested that military officers were considering a coup to suppress Slovenia's growing nationalism. Apart from the federal government itself, the Army is—with the demise of the Communist Party—the country's only "Yugoslav" institution. Its officer corps is about seventy per cent Serb, and while it is said to be hostile to Milosevic for promoting disunity, and particularly for his high-handedness in Kosovo, it exhibits the traditional Serbian preference for centralized rule. For decades, the Army was dominated by the men who had fought at Tito's side in the war of liberation, and it continues to be imbued with a dedication to socialism and to the Yugoslav Idea—both of which are viewed with suspicion in Slovenia. Yugoslavs generally expect the Army to stay out of politics, however, and the 1988 arrests and subsequent trial, in which all four defendants were found guilty and given jail sentences of varying lengths, aroused the latent animosity of the Slovenes toward the federation and Communism—and, particularly, toward the Serbs.

Far from seeking to suppress this animosity, Milan Kucan, the popular leader of Slovenia's reformed Communist Party, encouraged it. By 1989, Slovenian dissident groups were establishing political parties and calling for free elections, and, though both were illegal under Tito's one-party constitution, Kucan readily bowed to the demands. In Belgrade, Milosevic angrily protested the anti-Serb tone that politics were taking in Slovenia, not just among the dissidents but within the Party itself. In November of 1989, in a rage at the Slovenes' refusal to back him in the matter of Kosovo's Albanians, he declared a boycott of Slovenian products in Serbia. A month later, the Slovenes enacted a multiparty election law. In the balloting the following April—it preceded the Croatian election by two weeks and was Yugoslavia's first free election since the nineteen-thirties—Kucan was chosen as Slovenia's President, but the Communists, despite having changed their name to the Party of Democratic Reform, won only thirty-eight out of two hundred and forty seats in the Slovenian Assembly. A coalition known as DEMOS, promising an independent Slovenia with a market economy, was the big winner, taking a majority of a hundred and twenty-six seats. In the first week of July, the Assembly adopted a Declaration of Sovereignty—a breakaway act that differed hardly at all from the declarations of the Croatian government and Kosovo's rump Assembly the same month.

"Yugoslavia as a federation no longer has any support in Slovenia," I was told last summer by Joze Pucnik, who is the leader of DEMOS, and did well in a race against Kucan for Slovenia's Presidency, winning forty-one per cent of the vote. With his short haircut and bulging muscles, Pucnik, a Social Democrat in his fifties, had the look of a workingman. "For too long, we lived in a lawless state, in which power was exercised contrary to the popular will by the Communist Party," he said. "Mutual trust and confidence within the federation was a myth that was kept alive only by dictatorship, by Tito's charismatic personality. When he died, it disappeared. The illusion of unity that his leadership perpetuated is not enough, now that he is gone, to

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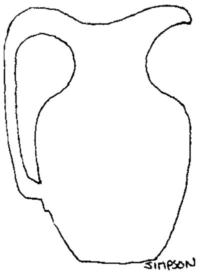
run a democratic, industrial society."

Pucnik said that Slovenia opposed the existence of a federal Presidency, and, in fact, of a federal parliament. He said that Prime Minister Markovic had no right to call federal elections, though they are required by Tito's constitution. When I asked Pucnik how he felt about a central bank and a unified monetary system, which Markovic considers essential, he replied that he kept an open mind on "technical questions." Slovenia, he said, did not need the rest of Yugoslavia in order to be economically viable; the Serbian boycott had proved that Slovenia, contrary to what Markovic contended, could get along without the Yugoslav market. (Many economists, including some Slovenes, support Markovic on this point, holding that it will take years for Slovenia to find new markets for its products.) And the European Community, Pucnik maintained, would be more likely to welcome an independent Slovenia as a member than to welcome Yugoslavia as a whole—this prediction being the standard line among Slovenian nationalists, even though the Community has repeatedly urged that Yugoslavia stay together and has warned that it is in no way interested in the membership of any secessionist republics. Pucnik also said that Slovenia had proposed to replace the Yugoslav Army with the existing republican militias—the Territorial Defense Forces—in order to provide for the common defense. He acknowledged that Slovenia's political agenda created the possibility of civil war but expressed doubt that the Army would intercede to maintain the federation by force. A more immediate fear in Slovenia, he told me, was that Serbia would use the Army to back up its rule in Kosovo. If that happened, Slovenia would break all relations and recall its citizens from Belgrade, he said, and that would mean the end of the country.



Lojze Peterle, the Prime Minister of Slovenia, received me wearing a short-sleeved shirt, jeans, and a pair of sandals. At forty-two, he was slim and bearded, and had about him something of the air of a hippie or a religious ascetic. He is a Christian Democrat, and shortly after he was confirmed by the Assembly he flew to Rome to call on the Pope, presumably to dramatize Slovenia's difference from the Slavs living to the south. Trained in geography and history at the University of Ljubljana, Peterle had worked in town planning, and he entered politics through the environmental movement. Until the recent election, he was the executive editor of *2000*, which he described to me as a magazine for Catholic students and intellectuals. Janez Jansa, his Minister of Defense, is a pacifist, and was one of the *Mladina* journalists convicted in the case of the stolen Army documents.

"The existing organization of Yugoslavia can lead only to disaster," Peterle said. "What I favor in its place is an economic union, a customs union, a monetary union, and a common defense strategy based on individual armies. For this we need no federal government, only a forum for negotiating. The Declaration of Sovereignty that we passed in July was not equivalent to secession. It was an expression of our political will, and the basis for enabling legislation that we will pass. We are willing to discuss confederation with the other republics. But we do not consider ourselves Yugoslavs. Our preference is for a peaceful transition to a confederal form, in which there will be no need for pan-Yugoslav institutions, elections, or parties. What Slovenia wants is normal, by world and European standards, and I hope we can avoid a head-on collision with our fellow-republics. It may be that we will form a confederation with Croatia—and with Bosnia and Herzegovina, if it wants to join. But we must have a funeral for the old Yugoslavia before we can have a civilized discussion of what to do with the inheritance."

In early December, Slovenia raised the stakes by proposing a basic change in federal relationships which reflected its historical suspicion of the Army. The Slovenian Assembly passed a constitutional amendment transferring the Slovenian Territorial Defense Forces from federal to local control, along with a provision that Slovenia would thenceforth join in Yugoslavia's defense only with its own consent. Janez Jansa announced at about the same time that Slovenia would no longer permit its Yugoslav Army conscripts to serve outside the boundaries of the re-

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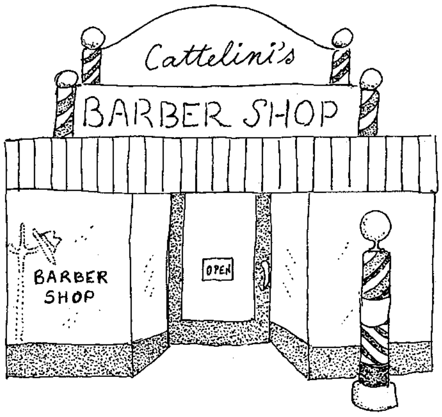
public. He also made it understood that Slovenia would not draft any more of its citizens into the Army until its differences with the federation were worked out. The federal government responded by nullifying the Slovenian actions. Meanwhile, Yugoslav Army units stationed in Slovenia moved—with no physical confrontation—into the headquarters of the Territorial Defense Forces and threatened to seize Slovenia's draft records. Obviously unwilling to push the incident to the breaking point, both sides tacitly agreed to a standoff. In a referendum in the last week of December, Slovenia voted by a nine-to-one margin (higher than anyone had foreseen) to empower the republic's government to declare its independence from Yugoslavia in six months, if its demands for a confederal arrangement had not been negotiated by then.

LAST April, shortly after the Slovenes voted DEMOS into power, the Croats elected Franjo Tudjman to lead them to sovereignty. Tudjman, who was once a senior officer in the Partisan Army, has long been the symbol of Croatian nationalism. In the nineteen-sixties, he broke with Tito over the issue of Croatian political rights and was expelled from the Party; he was twice imprisoned. After earning a doctorate in history, he became a professor at the University of Zagreb, and in subsequent writings he acquired a reputation as an apologist for the wartime Ustashe government, which he characterized as "the expression of the historical aspirations of the Croatian nation for its independent state." He has never denied that the Ustashe committed atrocities; he has simply maintained that the Partisans were just as bad. Tudjman waged an energetic and highly nationalistic campaign throughout the spring, and won a victory that brought his Croatian Democratic Union fifty-eight per cent of the seats—as against about thirty-five per cent for the Communists—in Croatia's Assembly.

Tudjman's title, like Kucan's, is President of the Republic; he has his office on a narrow street of the Upper Town, behind a grillwork fence watched over by a handful of bodyguards. I was surprised at how casual the security seemed to be, especially since Tudjman had made much in his campaign of the possibility of his assassination, citing as evidence the murder of a popular Croatian politician in 1928. On the day of my visit, which took place not long after the sovereignty celebration in the Upper Town square, the fence still carried a brass plate that said "Socialist Republic of Croatia," but a secretary assured me that a new plate, without the "Socialist," would soon replace it. Tudjman, a brawny man of sixty-eight, wore tinted glasses that gave him a Godfatherlike air. On the wall behind his desk was a pair of crossed Croatian flags. Though he speaks some English, he preferred to talk with me through an interpreter. "Croats belong to a different culture—a different civilization—from the Serbs," he said when I asked why animosities between the two Slavic neighbors had endured so long. "Do I need to remind you that the Roman Empire broke up into East and West, and that Christianity broke up along the same line? That is the line that divides Yugoslavia. Croats are part of Western Europe, part of the Mediterranean tradition. Long before Shakespeare and Molière, our writers were translated into European languages. The Serbs belong to the East. Their church belongs to the East. They use the Cyrillic alphabet, which is Eastern. They are an Eastern people, like the Turks and the Albanians. They belong to the Byzantine culture. In the nineteenth century, people here thought that the Yugoslav Idea would save the Slavs from the Germans, on one side, and the Italians, on the other. But that was a romantic notion. Unlike the Germans and the Italians, the Slavic peoples cannot unite. Despite similarities in language, we cannot be together. Now nothing remains of the Yugoslav Idea."

Tudjman went on to say that Serbia's behavior in Kosovo was a reminder of its ongoing need to assert hegemony over its neighbors—that the drive for a Greater Serbia was permanent within the Serbian psyche. Slobodan Milosevic resented the democratic movements in Croatia and Slovenia and wanted to perpetuate the one-party system so that he could continue to dominate all of Yugoslavia, Tudjman said, but those Serbs promoting a multiparty system were no less determined to maintain Serbian control. He expressed irritation at the position taken by the American government and by most of Europe in favor of Yugoslav unity. It was inconsistent, he said, to favor the freedom of the Baltic states from the Soviet Union while opposing the sovereign self-determination of Croatia. "The survival of Yugoslavia is possible only under a new agreement," he went on. "Markovic's belief that the establishment of democracy and a free market will save Yugoslavia is naïve. Between the two wars, we had a free market and a Balkan-style parliament, and they did not save Yugoslavia from disintegration. We will support Markovic's economic reforms but not the centralized institutions he proposes. Markovic shares Tito's vision of a centralized Yugoslavia, though experience has shown that centralization is an illusion, a utopia. In the end, we must conclude that the only solution is confederation. If the other republics don't want that, we'll go our own way."



One of Croatia's problems is that since the election about half a million ethnic Serbs who live in the republic and make up eleven per cent of its population have been demanding autonomy—precisely what the Serbian government has denied to the Albanians of Kosovo. Most of Croatia's Serbs are concentrated in villages on the Bosnian border, where they gathered over the centuries in their flight from the Turks. Many were killed by the Ustashe during the war. The Croatian Serbs enjoy cultural autonomy; that is, they have the right to run their own schools and to use the Cyrillic alphabet, which has become an emblem of Serbian nationalism. The leader of Croatia's Serbian Democratic Party is Jovan Raskovic, who is regarded as Milosevic's agent. After Serbian voters elected Raskovic to the Croatian Assembly, in April, Tudjman offered him a high post, as a conciliatory gesture, but he refused it. Though the Party holds only five seats in the Assembly, Croatian Serbs occupy about a third of the seats won by the Communists, so their representation is about equal to their share of the population. Because the Croatian Serbs joined the Communist Party more readily than the Croats, and enjoyed its patronage, Serbs made up half of Croatia's police force and a substantial proportion of its bureaucracy, until President Tudjman instituted a program of Croatization to reduce their influence. One of Tudjman's major campaign promises was that the national patrimony would not be divided, and his government made clear from the start that it had not the slightest intention of agreeing to the Serbian demand for part of the republic's territory. Tudjman has referred to the Croatian Serbs as a "fifth column," whose objective is to shift the attention of the outside world from Serbian injustices in Kosovo to Serbian grievances in Croatia. His case is plausible. But even if it is not conclusive, Croatia's Serbs, in demanding a province of their own, have succeeded in drawing attention to matters of territory, which Yugoslavs consider the most inflammatory of the issues in the coming political showdown.

It seems to be the opinion of most Yugoslavs that the republics can disengage from one another without civil war only if territorial disputes are avoided. Tudjman has sought to keep the peace by announcing that he is satisfied with Croatia's present borders and will make no claim on lands inhabited by Croats elsewhere—chiefly in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Serbia has not been so abnegating, and there is apprehension that the call for Serbian autonomy in Croatia was a warning from Milosevic that it would be impossible for confederation, much less secession, to be accomplished painlessly. On August 19th, Croatia's Serbs conducted a referendum among themselves on the question of autonomy; not surprisingly, it was overwhelmingly endorsed. After that, whipped up by the Belgrade press, they periodically barricaded roads into their enclaves and prepared to defend themselves with automatic weapons and hand grenades. The situation reached a climax in October, when the Serbian National Council of Croatia, the Croatian Serbs' umbrella political organization, declared the autonomy of the republic's Serbs and took over Knin, a Serbian town near the Adriatic coast. Civil war

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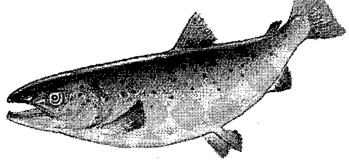
hung in the balance while the Croats decided how to respond. In the end, they elected to ignore the Serbs' declaration and to settle the dispute later, in the context of expected negotiations over Yugoslavia's future. Within a few days, the barricades around Knin came down, and no blood was spilled, but many Yugoslavs interpreted the incident as Serbia's way of staking out a position for seizing contested Croatian lands in the event of a breakup of the federation.

ONE of my last stops in Yugoslavia was Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is the most ethnically diverse of the republics. Its population of a little over four million is more than a third Serb and about a fifth Croat, but its largest segment, about forty per cent, is listed in government publications as a "nation" called "Muslim." Bosnian Muslims bear no relation to Kosovo's Muslims. They are not Albanians but Slavs; some historians believe them to be descendants of a heretical Christian sect known as the Bogomils, whom the Turks converted, in the fifteenth century, by means of political and economic incentives. While Croats and Serbs butchered each other in the Second World War, Bosnia's Muslims—a standing target for Christian reconversion—were butchered by both, and, in the fashion of the times, did some butchering of their own. Since then, however, Bosnia's three communities—"Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, three great religious cultures," a Sarajevo intellectual put it to me—seem to have taken a vow to try to live together in peace. The vow, it is said, has made Bosnia the most "Yugoslav" of the republics. Last August, when I visited Sarajevo, the Bosnian Communist Party was trying to preserve its power by brokering an accommodation among its ethnic constituencies, and, because of those efforts, it had become a bitter antagonist of Milosevic's nationalist Communists, in Serbia.

Milosevic's Bosnian counterpart as Party chief is Nijaz Durakovic, a forty-one-year-old professor of political science at Sarajevo University. Durakovic, a large, good-looking man with dishevelled hair reaching nearly to his shoulders, met me in one of those drab, formless buildings the Communists have left as monuments throughout the country. A Muslim, he had been recommended to me as unusual among politicians—and particularly Communist politicians—in that he said what he believed, no matter where the words took him. "Among the surviving Communists in Yugoslavia, there are now basically two ideological blocs," he told me. "One consists of those who want a modern, reformed, democratic Party—a classic European party that accepts challenges within a multiparty system and has cast off the rot of four decades of monopoly. The other consists of those who cannot detach themselves from the old days, when they had the state and the bureaucracy in the palms of their hands, and who want a Party that, in the old Bolshevik tradition, still runs everything. Unfortunately, what remains of the Party apparatus, at both the federal and the local level, is firmly held by the second group—and now they have given in, especially in Serbia, to the nationalism that they had always stood against, as they try to hang on to power."

Durakovic's name was associated with what is known as the Bosnian Plan, a vain proposal to save the Party, at all levels, by having it divide into two wings, one modern and social democratic, the other old style and orthodox. The plan was meant to transform the long-standing Party monolith, which barely existed at the federal level and was dying in most of the republics, into two federation-wide political organizations, each—taking a page from Tito—with an interest in promoting the survival of Yugoslavia. According to the designers of the plan, no other party could offer voters the Yugoslav option; but, like Markovic's reforms, it was acknowledged that the idea might have had a better chance of success a few years earlier, before the advent of nationalism. In any event, the plan's fate demonstrated that the Communists did not have either the psychological or the organizational flexibility to make such a radical shift. At federal congresses of the Party, Serbian opposition—representing the Old Guard—was strong enough to defeat the Bosnian Plan. Durakovic's pro-Yugoslavism and his criticism of Milosevic's policies in Kosovo have made him a target of the Serbs, including the large number living in Bosnia, who have increasingly rallied behind the Serbian flag. "We are worried about the breakup of the



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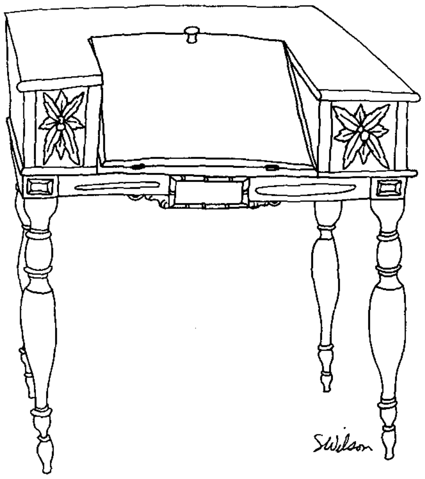
country, and we want to be the key to a reformed, modern Party that will permit Yugoslavs, wherever they are, to cast a vote for unity," Durakovic said. "But our Party is at a disadvantage—we are not yet comfortable with democratic change. We Communists still stammer when we pronounce the word 'democracy.'"

While I was in Sarajevo, I felt compelled to visit the street corner where, in 1914, Gavrilo Princip fired the shots that killed Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the heir to the Hapsburg Empire. Princip, a nineteen-year-old student, was a member of a nationalist band called Young Bosnia, which was committed to driving out the Hapsburgs and uniting Bosnia with Serbia. I had not realized that the Archduke's visit took place on June 28th, the anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo Polje—a scheduling that was apparently the Hapsburgs' way of humiliating the Serbs. (In Belgrade a few days later, I mentioned that possibility to Cvijeto Job, the career ambassador, who commented wryly that Stalin had chosen the same date—for the same reason—to read Tito out of the Cominform in 1948, and now Communism had gone the way of the Hapsburgs.)

The spot where the shots were fired is in the Austro-Hungarian quarter of the city—a miniature Vienna squeezed between an old Turkish neighborhood and the modern precincts. Set in the concrete sidewalk are two footprints, which legend says are Princip's. Across the street is a cobblestone bridge named for Princip. And a low-lying building at the intersection, the Young Bosnia Museum, commemorates him and his fellow-conspirators. I asked my guide, an intelligent young woman, whether all this memorializing was not excessive for a band of terrorists whose act had triggered so much death and destruction. "We don't approve of their methods," she said, in what sounded like a boilerplate response to a much asked question, "but we still admire them as heroes and as noble fighters for our freedom." Historians generally agree that the First World War was a conflict waiting to be ignited, and that Princip simply provided the spark. Still, it occurred to me that if there was no repentance even in Bosnia for what the assassination had produced, it was going to be extremely hard for the South Slavs to get far enough beyond violence and the small-minded gratifications of nationalism to create a responsible, democratic Yugoslav state.

IN November, a few months after I left Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina held an election, and the results were a disaster for Durakovic's Communists, who won only fourteen of two hundred and forty Assembly seats. Serbian, Croatian, and Muslim parties divided up the rest, in a ratio that reflected the division of the population so closely that one joker observed that what had taken place was not so much an election as a census. The Muslims, having won a plurality of the votes, formed a coalition government. Because of its diversity, Bosnia was expected to stand as a bastion for the preservation of Yugoslavia. But Milosevic's followers were already at work, seeking to detach the Bosnian Serbs from the rest of the republic, and calling for autonomous areas that would, in effect, be pockets of power for Serbia to manipulate.

Serbia held its own, long-awaited election in December. Milosevic, having substituted "Socialist" for "Communist" in the Party name, had seen to it that the campaign fell well short of the standards generally expected of free elections. The state television, radio, and newspapers fed the voters fawning portraits of the Party leader and rabble-rousing accounts of Croatian and Slovenian designs on Serbia, while all but excluding any reporting on the opposition candidates and parties in the race. The coverage was so offensive that it prompted a revolt among Serbian television reporters and the resignation of several writers at *Politika*, Belgrade's principal daily. Milosevic's chief opponent for the Serbian Presidency was Vuk Draskovic, an ultra-nationalist writer and a bitter anti-Communist, whose long, unkempt beard was meant to evoke the Chetniks—the forces, loyal to Serbia's monarchy and church, who were Tito's rivals during the Resistance. Draskovic's right-wing extremism and personal eccentricities permitted Milosevic to portray himself as a centrist, who could be relied upon to provide Serbia with peace and stability. According to outside observers, the balloting was marked by occasional fraud, but there were not enough instances of it to affect the outcome; Milosevic won handily.



The big loser in the Serbian election was Prime Minister Ante Markovic, who had bet heavily that the economic reforms with which he was identified would somehow persuade the voters to forswear nationalism and vote for his pan-Yugoslav party. He lost his bet badly. With his new party on the ballot, Markovic could no longer claim to be above the battle; not only he but his reforms became the target of attacks. Milosevic, in a clear bid for votes, had violated a federation-wide wage-freeze agreement by illegally appropriating federal funds and using them to grant increases to workers in Serbian state enterprises. He had also ordered Serbia's state banks to grant loans to the noncompetitive industries that Markovic sought to abolish. Croatia and Slovenia followed suit in loosening up the disbursement of money, and before long inflation was again on the move. But whatever the fate of reform, it is clear that Markovic's party was defeated by the head start that ethnic nationalism had achieved before he entered the contest. In retrospect, it can be said that the voters were voting not against him personally, much less against economic reform, but—as presented in the transformed persona of Milosevic—against Communism, conformity, and Titoism. Markovic's party also did badly in Bosnia's election and even worse in elections in Montenegro, though it did well enough in Macedonia to become a minority member of the governing coalition.

In the final count, the Communists—running on a nationalist platform—won in Serbia and Montenegro, and a nationalist ticket took the greatest number of seats in Macedonia. The first newspaper reports surveying the results interpreted them to mean that

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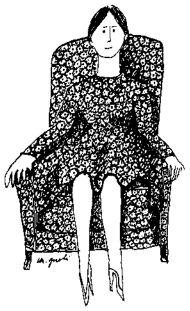
Yugoslavs had voted overwhelmingly for disunity. Within a few days, however, analysts began to express second thoughts. Though Milosevic had won sixty-five per cent of the vote in Serbia, he had taken less than a majority when enrolled voters who failed to vote were taken into account. More important, two of Milosevic's principal collaborators—the Serbian Prime Minister and the mayor of Belgrade—were badly defeated in the Assembly elections. Long-standing Party members, they were apparently marked for defeat for the very reason that they were known—too well known—to the voters. According to some observers, many of the nearly two hundred deputies elected on Milosevic's "Socialist" ticket, though Party members, were members of the reformist wing, and thus Milosevic could not rely on them to support his extremist positions. Along with about fifty members elected from the democratic parties, they were expected to make up an opposition bloc in the Serbian Assembly which Milosevic would be unable to ignore.

Since the republican elections, Markovic—no quitter—has met with the leadership of the republics and agreed to stay on as Prime Minister of the federation for six months. He has managed to force through a new program of reforms—among them devaluation of the dinar, to promote exports—designed to keep the country's economic and financial system pasted together even as its political system disintegrates. His success surprised many Yugoslavs, who took it to mean that the race toward the disintegration of the state might be slowing down. In effect, Markovic won a six-month reprieve for Yugoslavia, during which the country's leadership—essentially, the Big Three: Milosevic, Franjo Tudjman, and Milan Kucan—would be expected to engage in serious talks. According to this theory, after the intoxicating months of nationalist electoral victories the newly certified leaders were entering a period of sobriety, in which they would calculate the actual cost of their initiatives and perhaps find it prohibitive.

Meanwhile, the Yugoslav Army has adopted an aggressive, pro-federation stance. General Veljko Kadijevic, the federation's Minister of Defense, laid out this position in a December interview in the Belgrade daily *Borba* ("Struggle"). "The Yugoslav Idea has thrived for almost two centuries, and Yugoslavia as a state has lived for more than seventy years," he said. "Today, some political mediocrities and demagogues are trying to bring Yugoslavia to the ground. A country that lives in the hearts and minds of millions of people and whose foundations contain the vital interests of all our people cannot be destroyed. Wrong are all of those who think Yugoslavia is some house of cards."

In mid-February, the Army ordered the arrest of the Croatian Minister of Defense, on the charge of planning a rebellion against the federation. Croatia's government, having earlier submitted to the disarming of its Territorial Defense Forces, which consisted largely of Serbs, had begun beefing up its local police units—to the point where the Army regarded them as a threat to its authority. (In October, Croatia had received a shipment of ten thousand Kalashnikov assault rifles from Hungary; the Army, on learning of the purchase, was furious.) To win support for its arrest order, the Army released a film—surreptitiously shot—purporting to show the minister, Martin Spegelj, plotting the liquidation of Army officers and their families. The episode inflamed public opinion both in Serbia and in Croatia, and it was aggravated by Croatia's permitting Spegelj to remain at large, under the protection of Croatian security forces. In early March, the federal Presidency took the unprecedented step of involving the Army in Croatia's interethnic squabbles. Its mission was to support the Croatian police in putting down an insurrection of Croatian Serbs in the town of Pakrac. The incident seemed to suggest that Serbs and Croats could work together to maintain order; nevertheless, the Army has made it clear that contingents based in the republics will by no means be withdrawn simply because a republican government declares secession.

The federation's top leaders have been meeting with some regularity since the first of the year, but they have not managed even to define their objective. Though Kucan has kept the door open to confederation, the DEMOS majority in the Slovenian parliament continues to pass separatist laws, insisting that Slovenia will be an independent state no later than this summer. Milosevic, for his part, argues that if Slovenia can secede from Yugoslavia the Croatian Serbs can secede from Croatia—an act that would undoubtedly touch off a frenzy of border redrawing almost sure to lead to violence. Tudjman refused to attend a meeting of the republican Presidents in early February, because a group of Serbian women was picketing the meeting place with signs that denounced the Croatians as Ustashe; no one doubted that Milosevic had put them up to it. The transcript of a subsequent meeting, which was released to the press, revealed the pettiness and personal animosities that have begun to infect their debate and was considered such an embarrassment that further press handouts seem unlikely.

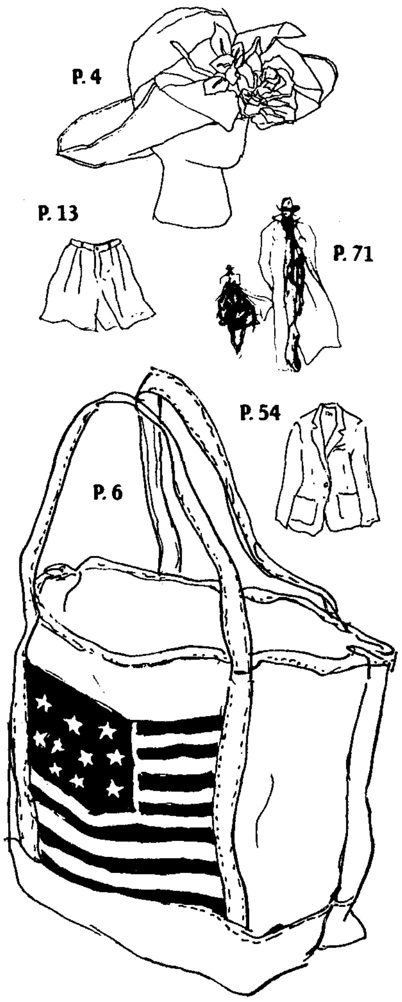


The republics appear to have some commitment to resolving Yugoslavia's future through means that are deemed legal by outsiders. The European governments, whose support they regard as vital, have made it clear that they will recognize no outcome that lacks federation-wide consent—particularly on the sensitive matter of borders. As matters now stand, the republics are divided into three groups: Slovenia and Croatia seem determined to quit Yugoslavia, though Tudjman is following a more cautious course than the Slovenes are. Serbia and its satellite, Montenegro, remain committed to a federation and have even proposed strengthening its constitution along American lines. Bosnia and Macedonia, in the middle and frightened at the prospect of staying in a four-member federation that will be dominated by Serbia, are trying to keep Yugoslavia configured much as it already is. Macedonia, moreover, believes that Greece and Bulgaria, its neighbors, have designs on its territory, and that the full federation is its best protection.

Ironically, Yugoslavia's effort to build a newly integrated state structure could well founder where disintegration began—with Kosovo. In the Serbian election, Kosovo's seven hundred thousand Albanian voters, on instructions from the leadership of the Democratic Alliance, chose to abstain, and thereby waived the prospect of holding some thirty seats—a sizable minority bloc—in the Serbian Assembly. When I asked Ibrahim Rugova, the Alliance's leader, to explain this strategy, he was unable to make a coherent case. "We can't accept being nothing more than a minority in the Serbian Assembly," he said. "We still oppose violence. We believe in a political solution. But the Serbs are making life more difficult for us every day, and it has got worse since the election."

It appears that for the foreseeable future Milosevic has succeeded in thwarting the strategy of the Albanians of Kosovo to vote themselves a modicum of power. More important, he is clearly not disposed to be accommodating about Kosovo, even as a way of setting a new tone of compromise in Yugoslavia. A rumor has it, in fact, that a deal is brewing between Milosevic and Tudjman under which Croatia will give the Serbs a free hand in Kosovo in return for a free hand for Tudjman in dealing with Croatia's Serbs. Such a prospect is likely only to embitter ethnic relations throughout the federation. A new factor in everyone's calculations, however, is the democratic wave that is sweeping through Albania, for it raises a strong possibility that the rigid Stalinism of the past half century will vanish as an obstacle to a union of Albanians on both sides of the frontier. Since the beginning of the year, the Albanians of Kosovo and the Albanians of Albania have been in frequent contact. Rugova travelled to the Albanian capital in February for talks with the democratic forces there. Since the Kosovo Albanians see no prospect whatever of satisfying their nationalist aspirations as a part of Serbia, it appears more and more likely to Yugoslavs that a movement for Albanian unification will arise, perhaps very soon. The Serbs have already shown how intransigent they can be in the face of a far lesser threat. The chain reaction that brought about the collapse of Titoism started on the streets of Pristina, and it could well wind back to Pristina, to put an end to the Yugoslav Idea once and for all.

—MILTON VIORST



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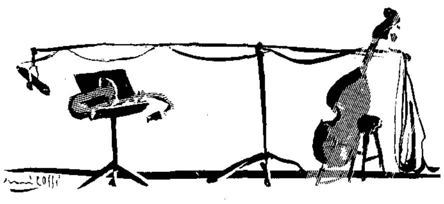
JAZZ

Sidney Bechet

THE soprano saxophonist and clarinettist Sidney Bechet was, in his primeval way, probably the most lyrical and dramatic of all American jazz musicians. He was born in New Orleans in 1897 and died in Paris in 1959. New Orleans at the beginning of the century had long been a hothouse of opera, classical concerts, and brass bands, and the clarinettists who were Bechet's models—Lorenzo Tio, Jr., George Baquet, and Big Eye Louis Nelson—had grown up within this tradition. They had ornate attacks and intense vibratos (most used the B-flat Albert-system clarinet, which has a plummy, Edwardian sound); they relished glissandos and crowds of notes; and they sailed like swallows over the thick collective ensembles of the early New Orleans jazz bands. Bechet, who was something of a prodigy, began as a clarinettist and cornettist (he is said to have been a brass-band cornettist of great power), but made the esoteric soprano saxophone his principal instrument after coming upon one in a London shop in 1920. His style on the soprano was almost operatic. He had a wide, rapid vibrato, a sumptuous, commanding sound, and a majestic, often highly emotional attack. (None of the soprano saxophonists he inspired—among them Johnny Hodges, Bob Wilber, Steve Lacy, John Coltrane, Zoot Sims, and Branford Marsalis—have matched his tone. Nor have they always managed to play this difficult instrument in tune, as Bechet did.) He was a rococo improviser, who used a lot of exclamatory effects like growls and sustained, sometimes piercing high notes. He made simple phrases sound ingenious by the way he placed and accented their notes. He liked long notes, which snapped in the wind of his vibrato, and he liked ascending and descending swoops and daring intervals. Rococo jazz players often become trapped in their own swirls, but Bechet's melodic lines invariably moved forward; he was as powerful a rhythmic player as he was a melodic player. When he stretched out, his solos seemed to gain momentum (he had flawless time), to gather themselves together and gallop down the final eight or sixteen bars. His clarinet playing was not as prepossessing as his soprano. He got a thin, piping tone that was further diluted by his overwhelming vibrato. He sounded diminished on the clarinet. But when he rooted around in his chalumeau register, which approximated the roominess of his soprano, he would turn up outrageous blue notes and mourning sotto-voce asides.

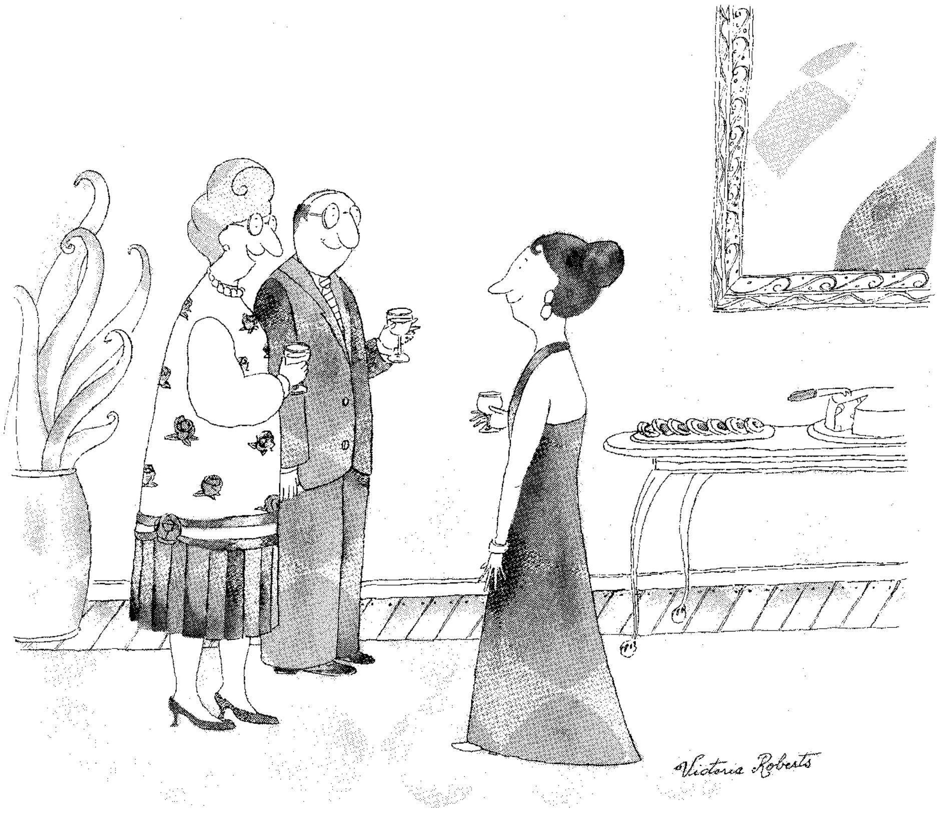
Bechet doesn't fit anywhere stylistically. His vibrato always made him sound old-fashioned, but he wasn't old-fashioned. Nor was he modern. He created his own time and lived within it. He was a New Orleanian, but he didn't have much in common with such New Orleans heavyweights as Louis Armstrong and Red Allen. (He did seem akin to an older New Orleans musician—Jelly Roll Morton. They recorded together only once, but the results are intimate and natural.) He was at ease with an extraordinary variety of musicians. They ranged from Earl Hines to Sidney Catlett to Charlie Shavers to the Ellington band, and on to the modernists Kenny Clarke and Martial Solal. Yet he remained imperturbable and unchanged. He did not like the other horns in his bands to upstage him. He would play duets with them, and he gave them solo space, but he never let them dominate. He was the first jazz romantic.

His life was equally untrammelled. The youngest son of ten children born to relatively comfortable Creoles of color, he took up the clarinet at seven or eight, and lost interest in school not long afterward. He became a working musician even before his teens, and he began wandering, and wandered the rest of his life. By 1918, he was in Chicago with King Oliver and Freddie Keppard, and a year later he was in London with Will Marion Cook's Southern Syncopated Orchestra. The orchestra played in London's Philharmonic Hall, and the Swiss conductor Ernest Ansermet went to hear it several times and published an uncannily perceptive piece about it in the Swiss *Revue Romande*. His comments on Bechet begin, "There is in the Southern Syncopated Orchestra an extraordinary clarinet virtuoso who is, so it seems, the first of his race to have composed perfectly formed blues on the clarinet." And they end, "What a moving thing it is to meet this very black, fat boy with white teeth and that narrow forehead, who is very glad one likes what he does, but who can say nothing of his art, save that he follows his 'own way,' and then one thinks that this 'own way' is perhaps the highway the whole world will swing along tomorrow." When the S.S.O.'s engagement ended, Bechet played in various English clubs and dance halls. A fan named Harvey Astley heard him. "Bechet's playing with the Jazz Kings was a sensation," he wrote many years later in the *Jazz Journal*. "Always arriving late, with a bulge in his hip pocket, he set the band alight as soon as the first few notes had fallen like rain from his magic clarinet. . . . The bright spot of the evening was when Bechet sat down in the middle of the dance floor, legs crossed, tailor-fashion, and proceeded to give us solos on his soprano sax, usually starting off with the Prologue from *Pagliacci*."



In 1922, Bechet had some sort of contretemps with a prostitute in England, and he was deported. He returned to this country and appeared with Alberta Hunter in a show called "How Come" at the old Apollo Theatre, on West Forty-second Street. He worked briefly with Duke Ellington, who revered him, and he had a hand in starting the Club Basha in Harlem. Then he was hired to play onstage in the "Revue Nègre," which starred Josephine Baker and opened in Paris in 1925. The show travelled to Belgium and Germany, but collapsed when Baker was hired away by the Folies-Bergère. Bechet the wanderer took off for the Soviet Union with a band led by a trombonist named Withers. He had become increasingly wayward; he was late for performances of the Baker show, and sometimes he didn't turn up at all. He got into real trouble in Paris in 1928. One morning, around breakfast time, he and the banjoist Mike McKendrick got into an argument about a woman and began shooting at one another outside a café in Montmartre. Three people, including the pianist Glover Compton, were wounded

(McKendrick and Bechet were unharmed). Bechet went to jail in Paris for almost a year and was barred from the country. Back to the United States, a stint with Noble Sissle, and several months with his red-hot six-piece band at the Savoy Ballroom. Then the Depression closed in, and Bechet, after making a pass at tailoring, considered becoming an undertaker. But he rejoined Sissle in 1934 and stayed until 1938, when he went into Nick's in Greenwich Village. His fame increased steadily during the next fifteen years, but he was a poor businessman, and he never stopped scuffling. He returned to France for a jazz festival in 1949, and settled there permanently in 1951. (The operators of the festival had somehow got Bechet's banishment lifted.) Although the French came to love Bechet and he died cosseted and celebrated, he never made life easy for himself, or for others. His white hair and round face gave him a kindly-uncle look, but he was a martinet on the stand, and he had a terrible temper. ("It was like working for Bismarck," the pianist Dick Wellstood once said.) And he could be sly and evasive and parsimonious. Like most New Orleans musicians, pride was his engine.



"We're perennials."

Some of Bechet's best recordings were made for Victor between 1932 and 1941. He recorded fifty-seven numbers for the label, and RCA has now released them all together for the first time on three CDs, as "Sidney Bechet: The Victor Sessions." At least half of the fourteen sessions in the set contain classics. "I've Found a New Baby" and "Shag," from the first Victor date, recorded in 1932 with the Savoy Ballroom band, are rampaging up-tempo numbers—ringing announcements that a new and irrepressible jazz improviser had arrived. (Bechet had made a couple of famous dates with Louis Armstrong in 1924, but most of his earlier recordings were done with singers.) Six years later, the French jazz critic Hugues Panassié came to this country to produce some records, and the four he made with Bechet—"Really the Blues," "Ja-Da," "When You and I Were Young, Maggie," and "Weary Blues"—are easy, graceful small-band sides, despite the presence of the dreadful clarinettist Mezz Mezzrow. (Eddie Condon, one of the great New York wits of the thirties and forties, said this about Panassié's trip: "I don't see why we need a Frenchman to come over here and tell us how to play American music. I wouldn't think of going to France and telling him how to jump on a grape.") The Jelly Roll Morton date, recorded a year later with a pickup band that included the New Orleans clarinettist Albert Nicholas, the trumpeter Sidney De Paris, and the drummer Zutty Singleton, is peerless. Bechet's solos soar, De Paris growls, and the ensemble passages are dense and mysterious. De Paris reappears in "Wild Man Blues" and "Nobody Knows the Way I Feels Dis Mornin'," made in 1940, with Sandy Williams on trombone and Sid Catlett on drums. Both numbers are supreme dirges. (The "Shake It and Break It" from the same session that is included on the album is an interesting but inferior take. No mention is made of this substitution in the accompanying booklet, which is a garble. Nor are we told that the three numbers tacked onto the end of the album were not done for Victor but for V-disc, a Second World War label that was distributed exclusively to the troops.) Three months later, Bechet led one of the strangest dates he ever made. Present were the Ellington cornettist Rex Stewart and the great modernist pianist Earl Hines, along with two New Orleans veterans, the bassist John Lindsay and the drummer Baby Dodds. Hines is exceptional, particularly in "Save It, Pretty Mama," and Stewart, apparently piqued at not being the first choice on trumpet for the date, is at his cantankerous best.

Two of Bechet's last Victor sessions had Charlie Shavers on trumpet; his facility and huge tone match Bechet's generous dimensions. There are a meditative slow blues "Texas Moaner," a medium-fast "Lady, Be Good," on which Catlett takes a stunning eight-bar solo, and a "Mood Indigo," where Shavers and Bechet (on clarinet) stay down in their lower registers and talk like old, concerned friends. There are countless recordings of "Mood Indigo," but none is more blue and beautiful.

Bechet had a freakish streak. In April of 1941, succumbing to the adulation that by then surrounded him, he made pioneering, multi-track, one-man-band versions of "The Sheik of Araby" and "Blues of Bechet," on which he played clarinet, soprano and tenor saxophones, and piano, bass, and drums. The effect, with its concentrated vibratos, is like being at a tea for aging divas. —WHITNEY BALLIETT

THE THEATRE

House of Mamet

THE "wartime" of Keith Reddin's "Life During Wartime," at the Manhattan Theatre Club's Stage II, refers not to Vietnam or the recent Gulf crisis but to our own day-by-day cops-and-robbers warfare. It is a comedy of sorts—as much dramatic curiosity as play—about a young man called Tommy, who gets a job selling home-security systems. In the opening scene he is instructed in alarm systems and related matters by his new boss, one Heinrich, and then immediately falls in love with his first customer. She is a very pretty woman, considerably older than he is, and she responds wholeheartedly. We proceed, episode by episode, until, somewhere near the end, she and her adolescent son are murdered (through a fluke we needn't go into), and the comedy turns grim. Sporadically, John Calvin, the sixteenth-century theologian, enters, making appropriate moral pronouncements of an extremely gloomy nature.

Mr. Reddin is a good writer who certainly seems to know what he is up to, and the acting by the entire cast, under Les Waters' direction, is deft, yet I kept feeling that I should be laughing more, having a better time. Reviewing Mr. Reddin's "Rum and Coke" (about the C.I.A. in Cuba) five years ago, and, before that, his "Life and Limb," I wrote that his social commentary was negligible but his imagination was "vigorous." This time, the first words that came to mind were "sterile" and "remote." Nevertheless, that imagination does break through. At one point, Tommy visits a prospect who, sternly shunting him aside, displays his own private arsenal with a pride that would do credit to Douglas MacArthur. The actor is James Rebhorn, on temporary leave from Calvin and a couple of other roles. There is a lot of doubling; Matt McGrath, as the adolescent son and a tantrummy waiter, probably has more fun than anybody. Bruce Norris brings the right innocence to Tommy, and Leslie Lyles, as the older woman, proves worthy of his love. Best of all is W. H. Macy, a veteran of David Mamet's plays, who, as Tommy's boss, brings a welcome touch of Mamet to Stage II. Talk about vigorous imaginations! Scenery by James Noone, costumes by David C. Woolard, and particularly attractive music by John Kilgore. Afterthought: that Mr. Reddin has written a comedy about absolutely humorless people is one oddity among many.

ARTHUR KOPIT treads lightly but firmly on Mamet territory in his very funny "Road to Nirvana," at Circle Rep. Although the play is described as satire, I could sense no underlying rage or outrage, and consider it more a work of inspired ridicule and parody. This son of "Speed-the-Plow" tells the story of a pair of Hollywood producers, Al and Jerry, who have been estranged but reunite with much emotion and, along with Al's girlfriend, Lou, set out to secure the film rights to the autobiography of a superstar called Nirvana. The first act is mostly reunion and, midst sobs, the return of mutual trust, which enables Al to take the manuscript from its layers of wrapping and show it to Jerry. In the second act we are at Nirvana's swimming pool—a setting that gives scope to Mr. Kopit's boundless fantastical invention, what with push-button lighting and sliding panels and eerie entrances for the star, who wears a chiffon mask until she feels secure enough to remove it. Much of the comedy, though, lies in the dialogue, which is conducted almost entirely in obscenities—obscenities used to express every shade of thought or emotion, obscenities wedged into polysyllabic words, and the metaphors of obscenity made literal to shocking effect. (Could Mr. Kopit have in mind that the two producers are themselves dirt?) Amid all the talk, there is some action and some professional discussion, and at the end Nirvana strikes a bargain with Jerry that is startling enough to bring down the curtain—only there is no curtain at Circle Rep.

THE BOOTH THEATRE
t.f.

Under the nimble direction of Jim Simpson, "Road to Nirvana" moves with clarity and speed. Jon Polito and Peter Riegert are ideal as the two producers, and I also enjoyed the beautiful Saundra Santiago as Lou. The sets by Andrew Jackness, as lighted by Scott Zielinski, are admirable, and so are Ann Roth's costumes.

—EDITH OLIVER

Fine Lines

HAVING lately come from seeing Eileen Atkins' one-woman show at the Lamb's, I can state unequivocally that this stage adaptation (by Patrick Garland) of Virginia Woolf's "A Room of One's Own" is something every lively-minded young woman above the age of fifteen—fourteen, if she's particularly lively-minded—will want to see. This is not to say that other people—men, for example, or more experienced women—wouldn't enjoy it equally. But there is a kind of girls'-school humor—gentle, low-key irony laced with a pitiless acumen—that characterizes both the Woolf essay and Miss Atkins' performance of it. The show, which is produced by Arthur Cantor, made me want to call up the headmistresses of Brearley, Spence, and Nightingale, as well as all my old English teachers, and talk to them about group sales. I find, as a rule, that Mr. Cantor's one-person shows have that effect on me: they make me want to go out into the city's schools and round folk up. One season, he gave us Ian McKellen's marvellous "Acting Shakespeare," and around this time last year we had Alec McCowen's rendition of "St. Mark's Gospel," also at the Lamb's.

"A Room of One's Own," as not everyone can be expected to remember, is one of Woolf's meditations on the intellectual status of women—an essay based on two lectures Woolf gave at Girton and Newnham, the women's colleges at Cambridge. An informal rumination on economics and society, it's a charming proof of the dictum that the best revenge is writing well, for it is by extrapolating from quiet references to the minor indignities she suffered, on the occasion of her visit, at the hands of the university beadle and other male authority figures that she arrives at the observation that "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction." It's also where Woolf put forward her tongue-in-cheek theory about "Shakespeare's sister"—that "wonderfully gifted" girl who never wrote a word, died young, and lies buried at the crossroads "where the omnibuses now stop, outside the Elephant and Castle."

Still, why does anyone in 1991 really need to see this old-fashioned piece of academic feminism performed—even by Miss Atkins? The answer, I think, has to do with writing itself, and the degree to which we (in America, at any rate) have ceased to be a nation of private readers. There are certain kinds of deeply subtle prose which we no longer know how to read to ourselves (if we ever did), because we no longer know how certain utterances should sound inside our heads. It's for this same reason that the Wednesday-night short-story readings by professional actors at Symphony Space are sometimes such a worthwhile experience: you hear a phrase and, visualizing the words on the page, realize that you would never have known to come up with just that reading. Listening to the way certain words sound in Miss Atkins' mouth—"endowed," say, or "swine"—or to the way she wields irony and understatement, or to the repressed anger and precise timing with which she delivers a remark like "And if truth is not to be found among the shelves of the British Museum then where is truth?," you feel the actor-voices in your head being roused and called to arms, not so much in the name of feminism as in the cause of language itself.

APPEALING to a somewhat different taste and temperament, though similarly entertaining, is the one-woman show at the Plymouth, "The Big Love," in which Tracey Ullman impersonates Florence Aadland, the mother of Errol Flynn's teen-age lover, Beverly. Based on Aadland's 1961 book of the same title, and written by Jay Presson Allen and

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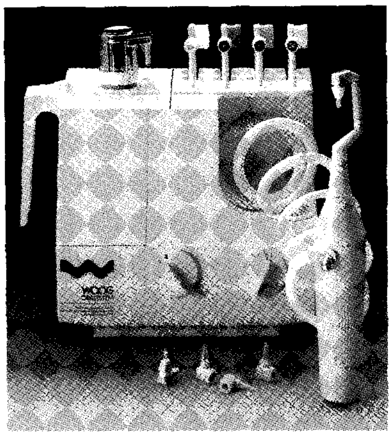

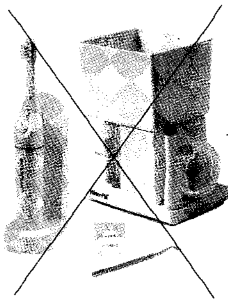

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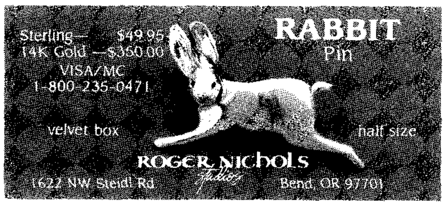

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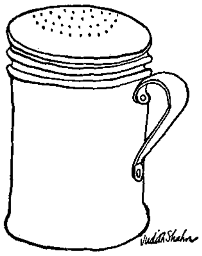
Brooke Allen, it marks Miss Ullman's Broadway début and isn't quite as dumb as it sounds. Miss Ullman is a performer who is always interesting to watch. She was even interesting as Kate in last summer's Central Park production of "The Taming of the Shrew," where she was hamstrung by A. J. Antoon's infantile direction.

These two one-woman shows pose a bizarre contrast. One is about language, the other about vulgarity. "A Room of One's Own" is Off Broadway at its sparest and most economical. Miss Atkins performs with the help of only the most basic lighting (and somebody working a tape recorder behind the scenes), on a stage decorated with just enough furniture to suggest an academic context (a lectern, a few chairs, a table littered with books and papers, a coat tree to hang a gown on): it's all in her body, voice, and presence. "The Big Love," co-produced by Lewis Allen, is a Broadway extravaganza, requiring a full-scale set and complicated projection and music cues. And while "A Room of One's Own," which has been produced for public television, really benefits from being performed in a theatre, where you can see how Miss Atkins captures and holds the audience, the Tracey Ullman show might just as well (or more effectively) be a television special.

All the same, "The Big Love" is fun, almost from the moment you walk into the theatre and catch sight of the garish map of Hollywood on the preset curtain, showing where all the stars had their houses. And you're glad to be in an old-fashioned theatre: it's an old-fashioned play. Most one-person shows (those that aren't produced by Arthur Cantor) have something showcasey about them: you get the feeling that the star is angling for a television slot. "The Big Love" doesn't give you that feeling. As a character study, it's awfully simple, and two minutes into the thing you know exactly what it's going to be like and where it's going to go. As Miss Ullman walks around her one-room ground-floor apartment, drinking before breakfast, waiting for a call from her daughter, and telling all, the irony is fairly straightforward (Flo talks without knowing what she is *saying*), and the bursts of lush Hollywood music (recorded) and the movie stills (projected) make it clear pretty fast that we're hearing the story of a woman who has lived out her fantasies through her daughter. Florence Aadland—a woman moved to do what *she* has done by vulgarity, snobbery, greed, and celebrity lust—is not a very interesting person, but there's pleasure to be had from Miss Ullman's performance, which is not without sympathy and not without contempt, and from the play and its contrivances. Jay Presson Allen is a good, old-fashioned writer, with good, old-fashioned notions about what's Broadway, what's entertaining, and what's sophisticated. And while there's nothing in "The Big Love" to engage the mind, and nothing about it stays with you, there's nothing phony about it, either. Phony is what the Neil Simon play at the Richard Rodgers is—artificiality without artifice.



I enjoyed the artifices in "The Big Love": the fact that they're turning off the phones at noon and we don't know why; the way we don't know what day this is or why Flo is so anxious to hear from her daughter; the way our interest in the story is concentrated and impelled by our sense of action going on somewhere offstage. I liked the fine line that Miss Ullman's performance treads between pity and reproach and between acting and shtick, and the line that the writing treads between being a play and being a riff. I liked the way the light changes outside the window and contrives to make David Mitchell's set look shabbier and more depressing the more we learn about Flo's life. The lighting (designed by Ken Billington) even makes the play seem more interesting, suggesting that there are fine lines between marble and stucco, weather and sunlight, glamour and squalor—like the lines between pimping and protectiveness, shamelessness and dignity, self and child.

Most of all, I liked that, in terms of authorship, this one-woman "Gypsy" is a mother-and-daughter act; for surely the Brooke Allen who co-wrote "The Big Love"—the program says that she has studied in Paris, written for a magazine there, and worked for the same Lewis Allen who co-produced the play—is Jay Presson Allen's daughter.

—Mimi Kramer

LETTER FROM EUROPE

PARIS, MARCH 8

CARLO SEVERI, an Italian anthropologist who works in Paris, remarked just after the bombing started that the Gulf War was a kind of Rorschach test, a blurry and provocative shape in which the countries of Western Europe identified themselves and the various styles of hypocrisy that used to be called their national characters. In Paris, one of the grim, nervous jokes that people told during the first days of war had to do with matching the matériel in Saddam Hussein's arsenal with the (if the word applies) sensibilities of the correct suppliers—gas and viruses from the Germans, enriched uranium tarted up as "energy technology" from the French, beautiful deceptions in the form of cardboard mosques and fibreglass tanks from the Italians. (I have heard them called "designer decoys," because they came from Milan and looked good and were a typical Italian triumph of style over substance.)

The French do a lot of business in uranium and plutonium. They sell reprocessing plants and reactors. They turn a profit by taking in nuclear waste from the Japanese and the Germans (and six or seven other countries) and recycling it for them. Sometimes they try to sell their own waste—they used to dump it at home, or in the sea, and now mainly they recycle it—in the third world. Nuclear waste is the West's dirtiest laundry. There is nothing anyone can do with it except dump it or bury it and pray for the years of its half-life to pass safely (the Swiss want to put their nuclear waste inside the Alps) or keep recycling it, as plutonium, in somebody else's country. The people who want "energy technology," and will pay, are rarely benevolent. Saddam Hussein never planned, or even pretended to plan, to use the technology the French sold him to put street lights in the shantytowns of Baghdad or to bring dishwashers to the Basra housewives. He wanted a reactor to build atomic bombs, and if the French built him one—they broke ground for the first Iraqi reactor, in the desert near Baghdad, in 1979, and when the Israelis bombed it, in 1981, they promised to build him another—it was because in the division and redivision of spheres of influence in the Middle East, which is to say in the division and redivision of oil rights and markets that began with the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Iraq "belonged" to France, the way, it was understood, Saudi Arabia belonged to America, and Iran and, later, Kuwait and the Emirates belonged to Britain and America.

French clientelism involves a complicated, prickly sort of Orientalism. It has to do with pride and prestige and with a French presence in the world—with the old rhetoric of a *mission civilisatrice* recast in postcolonial times as the rhetoric of first among equals. There are thirty-five Francophone countries—a hundred million people who are not French but speak French as a first or second or official language—and the French, whatever their politics, tend to believe they have a historic right to influence and privilege in those countries, that those countries are part of what they used to call the empire and now call the *patrimoine culturel*, or French civilization. The rhetoric is sentimental, but the French are never entirely sentimental where their interests are concerned. France is the third-biggest arms producer in the world. It is also one of the biggest arms dealers. The state owned the arms conglomerate Matra until the end of 1987. (It was the last "privatization" of Jacques Chirac's adventure as a conservative Prime Minister under a Socialist President.) The state still owns forty-nine per cent of Dassault and all of Thomson and Aerospatiale, and the rest of the arms industry is credited out to the state. (France practices a form of state capitalism by which companies borrow from the state and then transform their debt into shares, making the state a partner and their own credit as good as the *trésor national*, and never have to worry again about their interest payments.)

Iraq was not part of what people here call *la francophonie*, but it was, so to speak, available—it was all that was available—when France went courting, arms for oil. France started promoting Iraq in 1974, when Chirac was Prime Minister for the first time and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing was President. Chirac had a political interest in Iraq—his party supposedly got money from the Ba'ath Party. Giscard was said to have a personal interest, because his wife's family sat on the boards of some oil banks in Oklahoma, but he was also obsessed with oil. He wanted to be an oil power, and the problem was that France had no oil. People at the Quai d'Orsay, which was always considered an Arab lobby by the Élysée, convinced him that his best chances were with Iraq. Ten years later, some

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of his friends were involved in a foundation called Amitiés Franco-Irakiennes, which was more of a real lobby, financed by Baghdad.

Under Giscard and Chirac, a fortune in aid and arms and investments started going to Iraq, the first "aid package" amounting to five billion dollars. Iraq, in turn, guaranteed France's oil. France had once held a quarter interest in the Iraq Petroleum Company, and it had a share of the consortium that eventually took over the company. But Iraq Petroleum was nationalized in 1972, and for France, in 1974, the price of getting any of that oil back was planes and guns and reactors. Within a few years, the French were buying more than a third of their oil from Iraq. After the Russians, they were Saddam Hussein's best customer—and his best provisioner. Their patronage was their first important attempt at an "Arab policy" since the humiliation of the Algerian War, and it left them committed to Iraq the way banks are committed to clients who have already borrowed too much money to be allowed to default. It is not clear that the French ever expected the Iraqis to pay them back; and, indeed, the Iraqis never did pay them back unless the Saudis or the Kuwaitis were providing the money—which they did a couple of times during the Iran-Iraq War. What is clear is that over the years France provided Iraq with anywhere from twelve to twenty billion dollars' worth of military hardware and technology, that little of the principal was ever repaid, and that actually Iraq owes France about five billion dollars in unpaid interest. The government admits to much less—it likes to confuse the debt with the interest due on the debt—but no Frenchman believes his government about money, and, anyway, there is no way to get the figures, because French industry can pay a fine and avoid disclosure, and the French themselves, unlike the English or the Germans, have been educated to accept secrets, and even to create them. There is only one bill the Iraqis are known to have paid in France last year, and that is a bill for a hundred and forty thousand dollars from a printer in Normandy, who made the plates for a series of Saddam Hussein postage stamps, and who said that his last client to default was General Noriega.

The arms sales to Iraq were underwritten by Coface, the state's export insurance company—which means that the businesses that made the arms got their money fast, often in advance, and the debt was passed through the government, and the government in turn passed it on to the people in the form of taxes. One Frenchman I know, who has lived in the United States, likes to say that Iraq was "France's savings-and-loan scandal, with missiles." Of course, everybody with arms to sell sold to Saddam Hussein—the British and the Americans and the Belgians and the Chinese and about twenty other countries. (The Russians sold him four times as many planes and missiles as the French did.) The French claim to have filled no "new" orders since the end of the Iran-Iraq War, in 1988, but they delivered on old orders up to the beginning of 1990, and their deliveries included what one salesman at the Defense Ministry shrugged off as "seven or eight Mirages, some missiles, and 'spares.' "

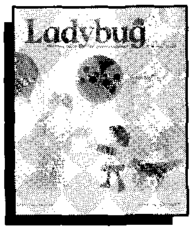
By August 2nd, twenty per cent of Saddam Hussein's arsenal was French, including eight hundred and eighty Exocet air-to-surface missiles and a hundred and thirteen Mirage F-1s—the Mirage is one of the best fighter planes flying—and the secret codes to operate the Mirages. French airmen assigned to the Gulf could not leave home until the codes on their own Mirages were changed, and some of them were still waiting here at Christmas. In the end, France's Mirages were grounded anyway. The fear was that in the air they would be taken for Iraq's Mirages, and attacked by "friendly fire." They were replaced by Jaguar fighter-bombers, which were twenty years old and useless for night missions. French airmen, who have a reputation as fine pilots, were left in the desert without much of a part to play during the six weeks of the air war. They flew only a thousand missions. They accounted for one per cent of the allied air power, and they complained about being demoralized. The week before fighting started on the ground, one French Air Force captain told a reporter from *Le Monde*, "It makes no difference if we are here or not. We have no reason to be proud, and we wish people would stop treating us like heroes."

THE arming of Saddam Hussein was something that took place under the respectable auspices of the Iran-Iraq War. The French believed then that they were patrons of the man who was going to take on Ayatollah Khomeini, and possibly take him out in the process, and even today, the polls say, they neither regret nor disapprove of the business that helped turn a regional conflict into what I have heard described here as "a third-world war with first-world guns." They say Iraq was at war with Iran, and France was "on Iraq's side"—and that is enough of an explanation. It is not the style here to indulge in mea culpas. People leave guilt to the Germans, who supplied virtually all of Saddam Hussein's chemical and biological weapons (the Swiss supplied whatever the Germans didn't) and then said "history" had made them pacifists. (Oskar Lafontaine, who ran against Helmut Kohl in the German elections late last year, said it was just as well, because sending Germans to the Gulf to fight would have been like giving whiskey to an alcoholic.) The truth is that the French acted throughout the war pretty much as anyone who thought seriously about them would have expected. They were not enthusiastic to begin with. They doubted that the war was "good for France." A lot of people thought it was not worth jeopardizing France's relations in the Arab world for a country like Kuwait, which "belonged" to Britain and the United States and was often described here as "a multinational company headquartered in London." Or they thought that by going to war France was giving away the Middle East to the Americans. They complained that America was already making a lot of money selling arms to the Saudis (which was true), and would presumably make more money selling arms to the Kuwaitis (which was also true), while France was going to lose a third of its arms business when it lost Iraq as a customer. They were resentful of what they saw of America's military power, and it did not much matter if Americans here told them that military power might be the only real power America had—that it covered other, terrible kinds of weaknesses.

Just before the ground war, an admiral from the Institut des Hautes Études de la Défense Nationale, which is the French war college, told me to keep in mind that the French make good fighters but not necessarily enthusiastic allies. They were correct, in the Gulf, to the letter of their commitment. They were scrupulous about observing and enforcing the embargo against Iraq, while Russian and Italian and Swiss and Belgian businessmen (among others) were continually breaking it, and German companies were still providing chemical and biological technology to Iraq through November and possibly into December. (A hundred and ten companies are under investigation in Germany now.) But until French soldiers, who are arguably the best-trained desert soldiers in the world, saw action, the war in the Gulf remained for many people here "America's war"—as if Saddam Hussein had been an entirely American invention.

A neighbor of mine who came over to watch the news the night before the bombings started remarked, with no evident irony, that the ideal, for France, would be for America to win the war without France, and be thoroughly discredited among Arabs in the process. Actually, that was what a lot of people seem to have wanted. Old Iraq lobbyists argued that France's "natural interests" were with the Arabs—by which they meant the Iraqis. Claude Cheysson, who had been François Mitterrand's first Foreign Minister, argued that the important thing was not liberating Kuwait but avoiding Arab terrorism here. (Cheysson was at the Quai d'Orsay from 1981 to 1984; he was supposed to "balance" the politics of the Élysée, which tended to favor Israel, but he balanced them more wholeheartedly than Mitterrand ever expected.) Even the Defense Minister—there is a new one now—wanted France out of the coalition. His name was Jean-Pierre Chevènement, and he was one of the founders of Amitiés Franco-Irakiennes. He called himself a "prisoner of conscience" in Mitterrand's administration. When Mitterrand sent him to Riyadh, he told reporters that he was only doing his job because "*il faut la faire*." He quit on January 29th, two weeks into the air war.

It was taken as common wisdom here



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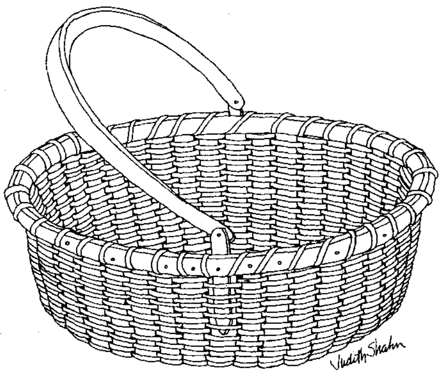
that George Bush knew Saddam Hussein was going to invade Kuwait, and even provoked him into invading, and in the end the interesting thing is that so many Frenchmen accepted the story so casually. There was, of course, an antiwar movement here, or the appearance of one, but the only serious boycott of the war involved a couple of days in February when some longshoremen from the Confédération Générale du Travail, the Communist trade union, refused to load twenty-nine arms containers onto a ship that was docked in Marseilles and heading for Saudi Arabia. France was remarkably tranquil, given the violence of the demonstrations against the Algerian War and the demonstrations in 1968, and even the demonstrations against the war in Vietnam when it was no longer France's war. A group called L'Appel des 75—it was organized by the Communists, and had seventy-five signatories, including the Trotskyists, the Anarchists, the Greens, and a group called the "green reds"—marched from the Bastille to the Élysée, reciting poems by Boris Vian and Rimbaud, and then a splinter group called L'Appel des 30 had a demonstration and marched to the Place de la République. The leaders of SOS-Racisme denounced the war, but the group, which for five years had been bringing French children and immigrant children together to fight racism, nearly fell apart fighting over it. Some of their backers quit—the backers were Jewish or close to the President, or both—and SOS-Racisme lost its grant from the Mairie, though not, as it turned out, its grant from the Ministry of Defense. (Most people in the group were too young to remember Mayor Chirac when he was Prime Minister for the first time, and started arming the Iraqis.)

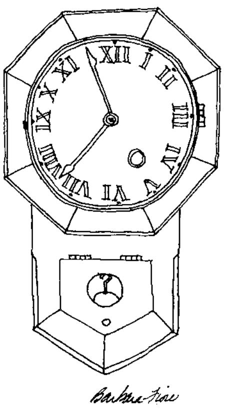
The problem was that no one in the peace movement seemed to agree on what, practically, French policy should be—on what the movement wanted and who its friends were. There were times this winter when it was hard to distinguish the arms business from the peace business, and if this was confusing to people who were for the war it was devastating to people who were against it. The question of whether France should be selling arms in the third world, or should be selling arms at all, was rarely raised here. It was only Iranians exiled in Paris who quoted Khomeini's famous warning—that one day Saddam Hussein's weapons would be turned against the people who sent them. Mitterrand gave a speech after the ceasefire and said the "lessons" of the war were the lessons of "nuclear deterrence"—meaning that France would not give up its bombs. He suggested that the war had been won because France had nuclear deterrents, but he did not think to mention that the war was fought because Saddam Hussein had nuclear deterrents, or was close to having nuclear deterrents, which France had condoned. (This was perhaps fair, since Mitterrand had inherited the problem of Saddam Hussein's reactors from Giscard, and he never rebuilt the one that Israel destroyed.)

In a way, Mitterrand's doubletalk over the past months was really a double bind. It was not clear that the French were going to "own" Iraq again, whereas the Americans were certainly going to own Saudi Arabia, and to share Kuwait with the British. Mitterrand had to fight—he said so all along—for what the French, like everybody else, called "a seat at the table." (Sometimes they called it the *après-guerre*.) But he had to appear to fight reluctantly. He could not rush into a "new world order" that was not *his* order. The British accused him of having "fast diplomats and slow boats," but that was precisely what he wanted. He had to exhaust the "Arabists"—the Élysée's word for people at the Foreign Ministry and the Defense Ministry—until they stumbled and dropped and everyone agreed that they were too embarrassing to the government to keep. He had to let Jean-Pierre Chevènement and the other Arabists prove that they were insufficiently "French" in their understanding—people with short views and petulant short tempers. He had to persuade the French that they were still the power of choice in the Middle East, that their *après-guerre* was rich, if not in contracts then in friendship and influence and expertise. The French saw that the Germans were so rich they could buy their power in the Middle East, and the Americans so strong they could bomb their way to power in the Middle East, but they knew that they would have to seduce the Middle East, like old roués in a play by Georges Feydeau, and it was not clear they had the stamina.



My friend at the war college says that maybe the real *malentendu* between the French and the Americans right now is that Americans believe they have either friends or enemies in the third world, while the French know they have only complicated family relations. France used to be the mandatory power in half the Middle East and all of the Maghreb, and its dealings with Arabs have naturally been more colonial than adversarial. Mitterrand entered the coalition promoting France as the ally who "understood" the Arab mysteries of face and language. (He had in fact been Interior Minister and then Justice Minister during the first years of the Algerian War.) He spent the five months of the ultimatum withholding and flattering, threatening and cajoling. He believed in his own version of the courtesies that disguise the strong and the posturings that disguise the weak, and if he got them wrong—if he sometimes had trouble accepting that Saddam Hussein actually meant what he was saying—he set an implacable tone for the war and the "table." My friend says that Mitterrand is the only politician he knows who can describe a deal with a sheikh—last week, Thomson and a couple of other French companies signed contracts in Kuwait—as if he were reading the Declaration of the Rights of Man. He calls the spoils of war the "fruits of peace." He managed to deliver his ceasefire speech without once mentioning the United States. He never mentions Britain. The British are convinced that his posture of understanding Arabs was really a European strategy, an excuse for not acknowledging *them*. You would not have known—reading the papers here or watching the television news or listening to the *philosophes*—that Britain fought in the war at all.

One of the great differences between Britain's colonial style and France's colonial style is that the British (like the Romans) never believed they spoke the same "language" as the people they ruled. They never believed there was understanding between them beyond the understanding their colonial arrangements required. The French, on the other hand, arrived in their colonies convinced that "Frenchness" was part of the colonial exchange, a state of mind that could be traded for freedom. The Raj didn't interest them at all. *Their* style was to create, if not Frenchmen, then a world of ardent Francophiles. They tried to make a "France" out of wherever they settled—a small reflection of the Métropole. The discipline they imposed on the people they ruled had to do with disciplining desire—the desire to "be" French, to think like Frenchmen. It was not an entirely cynical exercise. They believed that any properly instructed person would admire them—which is why children in Kabylia and children in the desert and children in the equatorial rain forest studied river trade on the Rhône and memorized Baudelaire and opened their Malet-Isaac to the Revolution at the same hour as children at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand, in Paris.



When the French left their colonies, they left behind their famous *gouvernements fantoches*, the shadow structures of French authority. They left managers and administrators—the people who ran the farms and the mines and the people who ran the banks and the people who ran the post office. The treaties they wrote and the terms they dictated were so preferential to France that in many cases they made money by giving up and closing their prefectures and their garrisons and bringing home their policemen and soldiers. For the French, the real trauma of decolonizing turned out to be that—despite the survival of the French language and French hauteur and French financial power in the colonies—the people they left behind did not prefer being French to being themselves.

There are Frenchmen who at the worst moments of the Algerian War believed that the Algerians would eventually settle down again as colonials. Not many, but more than even General de Gaulle suspected. It was common colonial wisdom that Arabs and Frenchmen shared a Mediterranean cast of mind and temperament. The French would say that they were both *riverains de la Méditerranée*, as if the Mediterranean were a small pond ringed by summer cottages. They felt betrayed by Algeria in ways they were never able to explain to their own European neighbors—certainly not to the British, who, however bad they felt about losing India, did not usually invoke "betrayal" to describe it. The fact that free Algeria turned repressive and corrupt after the French went home—the fact that for years the only free Algerians were the Algerians who had fled to France—was so unacceptable to the French (and not only to people on the French left) that it became a *non-dit*, a kind of national taboo. It remained a *non-dit* for twenty-five years, until the Algerians themselves started rioting, and the F.L.N. had to call an election. The result was a victory for the mullahs, and not the Marxists—for an Islamic movement not so different in spirit from Khomeini's, or from the one that Saddam Hussein was trying so cynically to invoke in August when he put "Allahu Akhbar" on the Iraqi flag.

The French, of course, see militant Islam as something that not only ignores or undermines the "Frenchness" they thought they had inspired on their colonial adventures but ignores or undermines the Frenchness at home. The spread of Islam has threatened if not always their sphere of influence then the didactic sphere they call their civilization. There are anywhere from three to four million Muslim workers living in France right now. (The figures vary, because a lot of workers are here illegally.) Most of the Muslims are North African Arabs and their children, who are by birthright French citizens, and, to the extent that those Arabs are a force in French political life, France's interest in the Arab world is bound to be special, and bound to be different. People here think that America could afford to play "cowboy"

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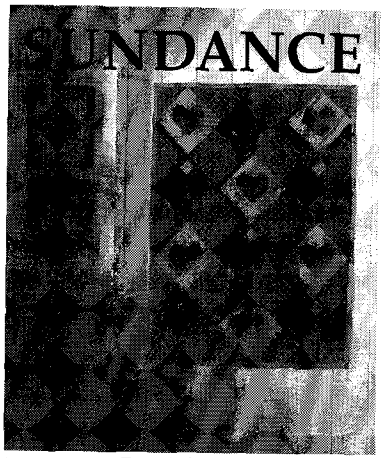

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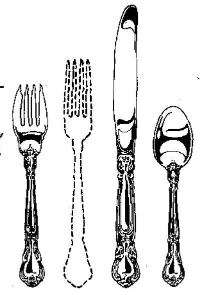

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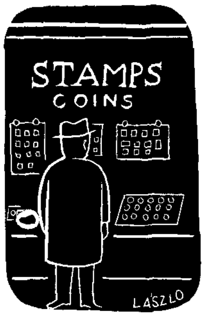
in the Gulf but that France could not. They say that Americans will go home now—*point final*—whereas the French will be going home to their three million Arabs, and will also have to explain themselves to the millions of Arabs on the other side of the Mediterranean who have spent the last seven months learning to love Saddam Hussein, and sometimes even fighting for him, and are now humiliated by his defeat. They compare themselves in this to the Russians, because the Russians live with fifty million Muslims in the Caucasus and the Central Asian Republics (there are more Muslims in the Soviet Union than anybody but the ethnic Russians themselves), and they are also worried about fundamentalism. Before the war, I sometimes heard Parisians refer to Iraq as "France's Afghanistan."

THE Arabs in France were remarkably quiet while the war was going on. Mainly, they were frightened—frightened about racism here, frightened about losing their jobs or their homes, frightened for their children at school, frightened about getting sent back to North Africa. There was a lot of tension, because the French were also frightened. They expected violence. In places like Marseilles, where a quarter of the population is Arab, the French were buying rifles and hoarding sugar and coffee, and a few thousand North Africans actually went home. But there was not much real discussion—unless you were in Paris and reading *Libération* and going on marches. The discussion was among intellectuals. Ordinary Arabs refused to talk to Frenchmen about the war at all. It was as if they had gone into psychic hibernation. They are beginning to emerge from it now, and the fact that they are emerging is something of a triumph for Mitterrand. His "reluctance" was also a kind of rearguard diplomacy. It is not easy to fight a war that is generally perceived as a war against Arabs and to reassure the Arabs you live with that it is not your war (or theirs). It takes a shameless man.

Mitterrand is shameless. His friends admire him for it and his enemies hate him for it, but it is the one quality everyone agrees he has. Early in his career, he survived an assassination attempt: he was shot at outside the Paris Observatory and escaped, a hero, unharmed and irreproachable. People swear that he staged it. It set the tone for a life in politics. An old Gaullist I know says that the difference between the General and Mitterrand (who is obsessed by de Gaulle and by the mystique of de Gaulle and tries to present himself as a leader in de Gaulle's style) is that the General always managed to act for France, that his intense self-interest amounted to a sublime disinterest, whereas Mitterrand's idea of France is comparative and competitive and, in the end, narrow. His two "peace plans"—one in September and the second in January, on the last day of the ultimatum—were distinguished mainly by the fact that they were unacceptable and that no one expected them to be accepted. They were meant to distinguish the French, in Arab eyes, from the British and the Americans, to establish them as what one reporter here called "the friendly enemy," which is a variation on "the reluctant ally"—the enemy who cared. John Major claimed later that Mitterrand never even told him the terms of the January plan. The Prime Minister, like everybody else, heard about them on the news. He apparently accused Mitterrand of not having team spirit, but, of course, the French have never had team spirit.

For months, the French commitment in the Gulf carried a kind of disclaimer. The Foreign Minister, Roland Dumas, spoke "for" the coalition, and Chevènement, the Defense Minister, spoke against it. Chevènement has been the Robespierre in every Socialist government since Mitterrand was elected for the first time. He is not a pleasant character, but he has a following and he runs a faction of the Socialist Party called (at the moment) République Moderne, and Mitterrand tries to control that faction by employing him. His politics are left-wing nationalist, *pur et dur*. He was a bad Minister of Research and Technology and then a bad Minister of Education, and it should be said that when Mitterrand named him to Defense, in 1988, it was to keep him out of the way, and maybe even make him useful. His job was, among other things, to roll over the Iraqi debt so that Saddam Hussein could order more French arms. (The Finance Minister, Pierre Bérégovoy, was supposed to block him.) Chevènement had no military authority—France is a country where the military talk only to the President, and the Defense Minister is an arms dealer—but he was hysterically anti-American. He appealed to the people who believed that France had lost its standing because of America (and would somehow get it back if America suffered). There were a lot of people like that. They would read about "the Americans' war" and about American imperialism every day in the paper, and they heard about it every night from television pundits. They were persuaded that France was in the Gulf and out of the Gulf at the same time. In a way, they were right. One of my neighbors, who is a wistful veteran of the Régiment d'Infanterie Coloniale du Maroc, the most decorated regiment in French history, says he often had the impression that what Mitterrand really wanted was to put his soldiers in Chad and claim they were protecting the west flank of the alliance.



As it was, France's twelve thousand six hundred soldiers in the Gulf were always under separate command. France's Mirages stayed home. France's aircraft carrier Clemenceau was dispatched with great ceremony from Toulon, and then spent the war cruising safely in the Red Sea. France's news came "censored by the Iraqis" or "censored by the American military," but never by the French military or the allies. In fact, the President was careful (and so was the press) to talk about *les coalisés* and not *les alliés*. The first time Mitterrand used "allies" in a speech was after the war was over. Until then, America was the warmaker and France was the peacekeeper, and it was sometimes hard to tell the right-wing nationalists (who were partisans of Saddam Hussein, the theory being that if the French belonged in France the Arabs consequently belonged anywhere but France) from the left-wing nationalists like Chevènement, or the psychoanalyst Félix Guattari, or the philosopher Gilles Deleuze, who talked about the "state terrorism" of the United States and said that France was the victim. It was hard to find someone who could argue against the war without arguing at the same time against the Americans. It was hard to find someone who could argue *for* the war without arguing against the Americans. The politicians here congratulated their troops on fighting well and then complained when George Bush congratulated them, saying the President sounded like a housewife talking to her maid. The politicians who wanted French companies to get into Kuwait fast, and sign some contracts, complained about the Americans' greed.

It was a relief to most people when the ground war started, and the French fought without the government's seeming to deny it or apologize for it or try to hide it. It was a relief when Pierre Joxe, the new Defense Minister—he used to be the Interior Minister—started giving briefings and answering questions, and doing it in what was, for France, a remarkably truthful and straightforward way. Politicians here are not usually comfortable with information (or disinformation) that is not attached to rhetoric. They are more at ease talking about "the civilization" or "the crisis of the civilization," and many of them seem surprised that the Kuwaitis are not talking now about distributing wealth to workers and the Saudis are not talking about democracy. The French discourse is in many ways naïve. The night the war ended, the Saudi Ambassador to France was on a panel on the television station La Cinq, with four Paris intellectuals. There was an argument about freedom in the Gulf and human rights and everybody living together peacefully and pluralistically and respecting one another's values. The Ambassador listened, alarmed, and then interrupted the intellectuals to say that Saudi Arabia had no interest in everybody living pluralistically together—not in Saudi Arabia, anyway. He wanted to make that clear. Saudi Arabia was an Islamic state, and Christians and Jews were definitely not welcome to come to Saudi Arabia and live pluralistically together. What was surprising was not that the Ambassador was ignorant or retrograde or ungrateful. It was that the Frenchmen seem to have expected him to sound like Montesquieu.

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AROUND CITY HALL

City of Angles

AS jubilation reigned in the White House and elsewhere over the glory of Saddam Hussein's defeat, it seemed that at New York's City Hall—after official expressions of gratitude over the war's end and the low number of American casualties—it was back to no-fun time as usual. The word that only eighty-nine Americans were killed in action in the six-week war, for example, caused some downside-minded New Yorkers to note that, at the 1990 standard local rate of between six and seven murders a day, more than two and a half times as many people had been killed during the same period on the streets, in the alleyways, and in the luxury apartments of this city. The fact that the air war against Iraq had begun only a few hours after Mayor David Dinkins presented his tentative budget for the next fiscal year, in which he announced that a prospective gap of two billion dollars would require him to lay off sixteen thousand city workers and to make deep cuts in city services—especially those involving social agencies—meant that during the war's six weeks City Hall was under almost constant siege by groups of protesters, some of them numbering in the thousands, who demanded the restoration of one outrageous and totally inhumane cut or another. To add to the fiscal gloom, last month Moody's Investors Service reduced its rating for the city's long-term bonds from A to Baa1, its second-lowest investment-grade rating. "Are you feeling a little moody?" someone asked the Mayor in a skit that was part of the traditional mayoral rebuttal to the Inner Circle show, the musical satire put on each spring by present and former City Hall reporters. (The title of this year's show, not well received at the Mayor's end of City Hall, was "Empty Pockets, Empty Suits.") "I wish you wouldn't use the word moody," said Dinkins. City Comptroller Elizabeth Holtzman disputed the Mayor's estimate of a two-billion-dollar budget gap for the coming fiscal year, saying that it would probably be three billion. State Comptroller Edward Regan's estimate came in only slightly lower. ("Edward's a comptroller, you see, and comptrollers rarely smile" was the long-ago caption for a cartoon in this magazine. Certainly the comptrollers weren't bringing a cheerful expression to the Mayor's face, which tends to be mournful in any case.)

A February visit to the city by President Bush to address the Economic Club of New York, a fraternity of business leaders, was not reassuring, either, although Bush predicted that the national economy would be on the upswing "before half a year is over." The three-hour wartime stop here required such local precautions as bomb-sniffing dogs, a large swarm of Secret Service men, a bodyguard carrying a Presidential gas mask (*Sauve qui peut*), and the attentions of fifteen hundred city policemen—many of them on overtime, which would not be beneficial to the city's budget gap. A big share of the police officers' time was spent keeping out of Presidential sight and hearing a thousand or so antiwar demonstrators who had gathered near the Hilton, where he was speaking. As in most places, antiwar protesters here often made the point that the billions being spent on the war could be put to what in their view was far better use for urgent social needs. It is not a good idea to try out such reasoning on strong supporters of the Iraq war, and certainly not on A. M. Rosenthal, the former *Times* executive editor, who is now a *Times* columnist. In a March 1st column, under the heading "Mother of All Columns," Rosenthal recalled "how drearily often during the war we got sophomoric lectures from the sob-sisters of journalism, politics and academia (both sexes) about how the war would still leave us with all the domestic problems bedeviling the country: drugs, crime, race, AIDS, S & L's, homelessness, recession, teen-age pregnancy, graffiti, garbage, loud radios and paper cracklers at the movies." In gratitude to George Bush's war leadership for having "upset the doomsday experts . . . whom it is such a delight to irritate," Rosenthal wrote, he was deliberately putting his message "THANK YOU AGAIN, MR. PRESIDENT" in capital letters.

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CRAWFORD

Being confronted by angry demonstrators is nothing new for Presidents—particularly Republican Presidents—who visit this city, famous elsewhere for its disproportionate number of aggressive, vocal, and, for the most part, Democratic residents. Recent antiwar demonstrations here included an unusually large number of African-Americans, eager to make the now familiar point that a disproportionate number of blacks and Hispanics were among the troops at risk in the war with Iraq. An aspect of hostility toward the war among some blacks that was not dealt with in explanatory statements out of the Pentagon is the fact that many residents of the Middle East, including Saddam Hussein, are darker of skin than are, say, Irish-Americans—a circumstance that has not gone uncommented on in black communities here. It is a matter of astonishment to some whites—transplanted Southern Baptists, say—to hear the occasional remark on local black radio and television programs "Of course, Jesus Christ was black." Some blacks opposed to the war—not necessarily Muslims—have portrayed it as a black-against-black confrontation. "We will not fight our brothers in the Middle East," the Reverend Al Sharpton said at a Harlem rally on February 8th. Not all local black leaders used this argument in expressing their opposition to the war. "If we want to bomb some place where sanctions don't work, why don't we bomb Johannesburg?" Harlem State Senator David Paterson asked at the same rally. Black opposition to the war is not solely a New York phenomenon. Not only did all twenty-five black Democrats in the House of Representatives—there are no blacks, of course, in the Senate—vote against the House resolution authorizing the President to use force against Hussein but, even after the war began, ten of them voted against the military action. These did not include Manhattan Representative Charles Rangel. At the Harlem rally, Rangel, who is by far the most powerful member—black or white—of the New York delegation, was loudly booed. Apparently, this was not because he had eventually voted in support of the war but because he had joined Dinkins on a brief trip to Israel, the week before. Black-white hostilities are very close to the surface in this city. In some neighborhoods, hostilities between blacks and Jews are not really below the surface at all. Representative Stephen Solarz' co-sponsorship of the January 12th House resolution to authorize the military action went over well in his heavily Jewish Brooklyn congressional district but has been unpopular in much of the rest of the borough, which, according to revised United States census figures, released on January 24th, is only about forty-seven per cent white, including some whites of Latino heritage. In this month's Inner Circle show, one skit made the point that Solarz had originally been elected as a strong opponent of the Vietnam War. Asked to explain his philosophical about-face, the Solarz character—played by a television reporter—said, "There were no shuls in Saigon."

A problem for those who maintain that the racial atmosphere in America prevents blacks from getting ahead is the fact that the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is General Colin Powell. In his March 1st column, Rosenthal recommended that a study commission be appointed to find out "what the armed forces do about motivation and reward that can be copied in civilian life," and that it start the investigation with General Powell, not only, Rosenthal wrote, "because he was a poor boy, an immigrant's son"—Powell's parents came here from Jamaica—"who became Chief of Staff, but because he is a graduate of the great City College of New York and C.C.N.Y. people are smarter than anybody," the modest Rosenthal himself being an immigrant (from Canada) who became chief of staff, one might say, at the *Times* and is a graduate of C.C.N.Y. "Empty Pockets, Empty Suits" offered a different explanation for Powell's success. "How did he get to be a top general?" one character asked. "A man familiar with violence, terrorists, street fighting, sneak attacks, and killing . . . How did he learn all that?" The response was "The old-fashioned way. He grew up in the South Bronx."

Powell, who has said that he, like other members of minority groups, joined the Army "to get a job" ("Two twenty-two thirty a month. I ain't done bad"), is not the only South Bronx graduate who had a role in the war just ended. Of the five men brought up in this city who lost their lives in Saudi Arabia, two, both of Latino heritage, were from that neighborhood: Captain Manuel Rivera, Jr., who died in the crash of his Harrier jet, and Corporal Ismael Cotto, who was one of seven marines killed by so-called friendly fire in the January 29th battle at Khafji. Cotto's family, Jimmy Breslin discovered, lives hardly more than a block from where Powell was raised.

THE war in the Gulf left its mark on discourse here, as it has in most places. It even altered the landscape for a time: after the ceasefire, the lighting on the Empire State Building was changed to yellow, representing the world's tallest yellow ribbon. On the day after the ceasefire, when Dinkins was asked if there would be a ticker-tape parade up Broadway, the Canyon of Heroes, in honor of the returning troops, he noted that the city had "the mother of all budget gaps." How could he spend huge sums of money on a parade when so many New Yorkers—especially borough presi-

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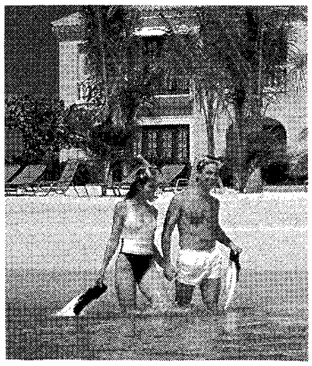

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dents and City Council members—had been outraged by, for example, his decision to close down fire companies? New York's most recent big parade—the one that honored Nelson Mandela last June—had cost a million two hundred thousand dollars, including some seven hundred thousand dollars for police and police overtime. (Some of Dinkins' critics reminded each other that he hadn't complained about the expense of honoring his friend Mandela.) The Mayor said he would appoint a blue-ribbon committee to come up with some other way of paying tribute to what he called "our heroes and she-roes"—on the cheap, as it were. Later, at the suggestion of Esteban Creste, who is the City Hall reporter for *El Diario*, the city's Spanish-language daily, he referred to it as a "yellow-ribbon commission."

By then, however, the same politicians who had denounced Dinkins for his budget-cutting program were even more outraged by what they saw as his selling the city's patriotism short. Herbert Berman, the chairman of the City Council Finance Committee, said that he would raise the money privately or the city would pay for it, but there would be a parade. Staten Island Borough President Guy Molinari, the only Republican borough president, had the same message; moreover, he said, General Powell had already agreed to attend. The state Republican Party leaders announced that they would try to persuade Powell to run for governor in 1994, though he was certainly not a resident of the state and they didn't know whether or not he was a Republican. On March 3rd, the day after the Inner Circle's "Empty Pockets, Empty Suits" show, the Mayor, his pockets clearly not as empty as had been advertised (if the cause was sufficiently irresistible), announced at a Gracie Mansion press conference that a private committee, led by Joseph H. Flom, a prominent local lawyer, and Michael Duval, an investment banker, would raise as much as five million dollars for a parade and other celebrations of the victory over Hussein, to be held the week of May 11th. It would be, he said, "the mother of all parades."

IN the months since last year's Inner Circle show (put on only a few weeks after Dinkins took office, it bore the title "Have a Nice Dave"), material for a less benign approach to the new city administration has piled up very satisfactorily from the point of view of skit-writing journalists. There was the statement last winter of Dinkins' press secretary, Albert Scardino, to Marie Brenner, of *Vanity Fair*, that the Mayor's generally hostile relationship with the press was the fault not of Dinkins—or, certainly, of his press secretary—but of reporters' having failed to adjust to the fact that City Hall was no longer being run by "tired old Jewish men." There was what the Mayor himself called "the famous headboard." Having spent some nine thousand dollars of his own money on a bedroom set for his Gracie Mansion quarters, the Mayor, who had been elected by the votes of many New Yorkers who saw him as someone who would be far more sensitive than his predecessor to the concerns of the city's poor people, had then had the set embellished with a matching headboard—hand-carved, at a cost to the city of eleven thousand five hundred dollars, by a carpenter whose primary responsibility was repairing furniture for welfare recipients and other needy clients of the city's Human Resources Administration. (The famous headboard even found a place in the debate over ways the city could cut its budget in these dangerous fiscal times. Jim Dwyer, a *Newsday* columnist, began a campaign to identify what he calls Human Headboards—"the job title for people in government whose duties are to read the paper and have lunch in time to go home for the day" while they collect salaries as high as six figures. Most human headboards were identified for him by other people, often their fellow-workers, but one, working in the city's Parking Violations Bureau, called to present his own human-headboard credentials as someone who, at more than sixty-eight thousand dollars a year, had been told to sit next to a filing cabinet. So far, no one from the city's Office of Management and Budget has been in touch with Dwyer about this useful research project.)

Also with inviting satire possibilities there was the Hazel Dukes matter. Dinkins had appointed Miss Dukes, the former state chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and a longtime crony of the Mayor's, to head the city's Off-Track Betting Corporation, a hundred-and-ten-thousand-dollar-a-year patronage plum. In a radio show last fall, Miss Dukes complained that when she went to city hotels she was "continually served my food and drink by someone who not only isn't black but can't even speak English." She demanded to know why such jobs didn't go to black men. When the *Daily News* called and asked for details, she said she had been talking not about Latinos but about those of another nationality—Ecuadorians—explaining, "I don't know what they are. I know they're not Hispanic." This incident understandably offended the local Hispanic population, which had given two-thirds of its vote to Dinkins in the 1989 mayoral election. It had been the first significant local election in decades in which Latinos threw in their political lot with blacks, and they had been a major help in bringing about Dinkins' perilously narrow victory—just forty-seven thousand votes. *El Diario* denounced Hazel Dukes' "Ecuadorian outrage," and ran on its front page a huge map of South America with an arrow pointing to Ecuador to show the Mayor's friend where it is: "OYE HAZEL AQUI ESTA." Ecuadorian waiters demonstrated outside Miss Dukes' OTB office, in Times Square, with signs that said "Instead of Spending $11,500 on a Headboard, Buy Geography Lessons for Hazel Dukes."

The Mayor's fondness for travel is another frequent subject of informal satire—even his trip last month to Israel. For his twenty-four-hour stay in that country, he was accompanied by his chief adviser on Jewish affairs, two press aides, his official photographer, and eight security guards. The Mayor had favored resolution of the Persian Gulf crisis through sanctions, but that, of course, was before the fighting began. The trip was a smash in Israel, and news stories from there reported that he was treated like "a head of state." "KING DAVID" was the banner headline on the *Post*, next to a picture of the Mayor holding his gas mask. (However, it was noted that he and his entourage stayed in Jerusalem, and not in Tel Aviv, where the Scuds were falling.) Both Dinkins and Representative Rangel said several times that they saw the trip as a gesture that would improve black-Jewish relations. The Reverend Calvin Butts, who is the pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church and is looked upon as the black New Yorker most likely to consider a 1993 mayoral run against Dinkins, said of Dinkins that the trip "suggests he is more concerned about his political relationship with, for instance, the Jewish community than his own community." Butts said he was "as upset as anyone" about Israel's being bombed, but he added, "I feel just as strongly that black people from the U.S. have no business being on the front lines in the Middle East when we can't even walk down the streets of Bensonhurst"—a reference to the shooting down in 1989 of a black teen-ager, Yusuf Hawkins, in that Italian-American Brooklyn neighborhood. Just before he left, the Mayor, apparently in a gesture meant to quiet black criticism of the trip, announced that sometime in the near future he would go to South Africa, taking Nelson Mandela up on his invitation of last summer—a trip that would surely not damp down criticism that he is happier being on the move to anywhere than staying in place and trying to govern New York City.

All in all, it was time for a bit of fun in this town, and on the first Saturday night of this month the Inner Circle did its best to provide some, working with the material that the Mayor and others had generously made available. The stage showed a dilapidated City Hall with a tennis court in front of it. On the first page of the program, the Mayor was shown sitting up in bed with his deputy mayors, their heads against the headboard, which was hung with its price tag of $11,500. There was speculation from the stage that the Mayor would have to hock the headboard and all his tuxedos to raise money to reduce the budget gap. Hazel Dukes (that is, a journalist facsimile thereof) appeared, asking, "What do you think this is, Ecuador—or one of those other European countries?" Dinkins' coziness with his old friends from the Harlem Democratic clubhouse was not treated respectfully. To the tune of "Darktown Strutters' Ball," reporters playing former Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton, former New York Secretary of State Basil Paterson, and Rangel told Dinkins how they planned to "benefit from your election" by having the Mayor cut them in on deals with the Japanese. "We're gonna put New York City in the black And we mean in the black . . . And we all will have first dibs When they serve us sushi and ribs." Traditionally, the third act of the Inner Circle show pokes fun not at City Hall but at national or international figures. This year, some of the third-act numbers dealt with events in the Middle East with an irreverence that was not in style in many other places a few days after the ceasefire. To the tune of "Rock Around the Clock," a chorus sang "One, two, three o'clock, four o'clock rock . . . Sock it to Iraq. . . . We're gonna rock Iraq All day and night." The next number had characters representing Bush and Vice-President Quayle delivering a duet to the tune of "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend." The song's new title was "Combat Is a Pol's Best Friend," its theme being "Hussein gets us all reëlected." ("How high the polls, As we march into battle . . . Good clean war It means four more And forget all those problems we had. . . . As jets fly high . . . we'll blast old Saddam in the end. . . . Combat is a pol's best friend!") Hardly had the notes of this cynical theme faded, however, when a very large American flag was carried across the stage as Mary Alice Williams, of NBC, solemnly rendered "God Bless America." Then there was a short break before the Mayor delivered his rebuttal.

In recent years, mayors responding to the satirical jibes at them in the Inner Circle show have enlisted the help of obliging members of Broadway musicals. This year, the obligers were from "City of Angels," whose title—this being New York rather than Los Angeles—was changed by Dinkins to "City of Angles."(In charge of his part of the evening was Barbara Fife, deputy mayor for planning and development. She had the assistance of Jed and Doug Bernstein, who often put on corporate theatricals; Herb Sargent, a top writer for "Saturday Night Live"; and Dinkins, who was said to have kept adding lines for himself right up to the last minute.) The rebuttal started late and ran long, as is the case with nearly all Dinkins press conferences. Otherwise, his contribution to the show bore no resemblance to the now familiar mayoral act at City Hall, where reporters have become inured to his often huffy and humorless responses to almost any question that implies some criticism of his governing of the city. That night, far from dodging the issues that the press had been giving him a hard time about in the previous months, the Mayor made more down-and-dirty fun of them than the reporters had in their part of the show. The headboard, for example, was the subject of a raunchier joke than any the reporters had decided to venture. (There were no human-headboard characters, however. Even on a night of fun, costly human furniture on the city payroll is nothing a mayor can joke about.) One scene showed him in his office practicing his forehand to the tune of "Take the 'A' Train," with his racquet also serving as the mayoral telephone. The Israel trip and the avidity with which he has been pursuing the Jewish vote also came in for satire. When Dinkins, visiting his tailor, asked why the tailor kept measuring his head, the response was "Aren't you here for another batch of yarmulkes?" When the Mayor referred to "my brother," and it was assumed that he meant some old Harlem buddy, he said that, on the contrary, he meant Yitzhak Shamir, the Israeli Prime Minister. The question was raised whether First Deputy Mayor Norman Steisel, a prickly sort, who had served as former Mayor Edward Koch's sanitation commissioner, had the temperament for his elevated new role. Dinkins demonstrated that he had come a long way from his first year as mayor, when he bore the attacks on him by his predecessor with almost saintly forbearance. With evident relish, he read the line "Any man who can clean up Ed Koch's garbage has earned the right to be first deputy mayor."

A particular surprise was the fact that the Mayor made a joke about his alleged sale of cable-company stock to his son, David, Jr. A special investigator appointed by the city's commissioner of investigation, who had been expected to absolve the Mayor of wrongdoing, concluded in January that the document referring to the sale, which the Mayor had sworn under oath was authentic, might have been written long after the fact and back-dated by a few legally critical years. In a skit, a secretary said to him, "Chief, here's the letter you wanted me to type for David, Jr. I think he meant 1991, not 1981, don't you? You want me to change it?" Dinkins' answer was "No, this is fine, thanks," and he quickly pocketed the letter. The Mayor even referred to Scardino's comment to *Vanity Fair* about the ethnic makeup of the Koch City Hall, saying to Tom Wopat, the "City of Angels" star, who was playing a City Hall bureau chief, "I need those tired old Jews." (During an intermission, Scardino, often described by Dinkins associates who recommended him for the job of press secretary as having "a wonderful sense of humor," went backstage. When he saw two black radio reporters, one of them Joe Bragg, of station WRKS, who played General Powell in the show, sitting around waiting to go on, Scardino, who is white, said to them, "For a couple of tired old Negroes, you don't look too bad.") Scardino explained last year that he had taken the job of press secretary because he wanted to influence government. Mayoral press secretaries have tended to stay in the background, but Scardino would stand near the Mayor during press conferences, his arms folded, and sometimes move forward and tap the podium when he thought an event had gone on long enough. On a few occasions, he tapped the Mayor. He issued statements on his own criticizing government officials—in his mind, it seemed, he was serving as a kind of lord chamberlain, which didn't leave much time for running an efficient press office. Early last month, he scolded the city's transportation commissioner for having publicly discussed department matters. "It causes me great concern that this was done," he told the *Times*. When Dinkins was asked the next morning whether the Mayor's spokesman had spoken for him in this case, he said no. That evening, Scardino sent the Mayor a letter resigning as press secretary, "for personal reasons," as of March 15th. Although in his Inner Circle rebuttal Dinkins referred to his departing press secretary with affection ("I'll really miss you, buddy"), the processional his staff had chosen for the appearance onstage of a character representing Scardino was "Pomp and Circumstance." At the end of the Mayor's part of the program, things suddenly turned serious, as they had at the end of "Empty Pockets, Empty Suits." After welcoming the ceasefire, the Mayor said, "We mourn the loss of American lives," and he added, "We mourn the loss of Iraqi lives as well"—deaths that had not often been mentioned in the national or the local discourse over the war's end. —ANDY LOGAN

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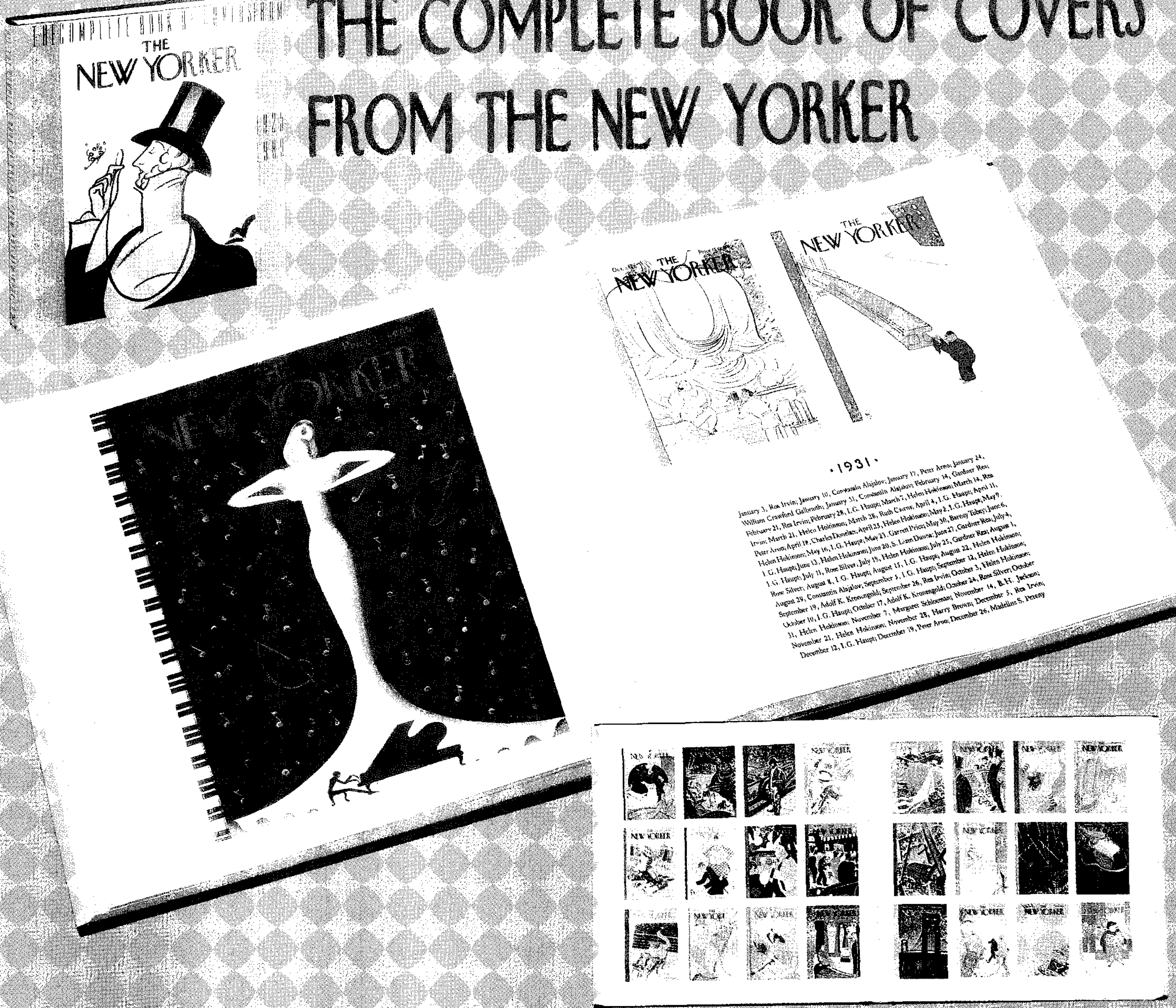

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MUSICAL EVENTS

Czech Masters

LAST year, after the St. Louis production of "The Devil and Kate," I remarked that Dvořák, a composer amiable and admirable, was one less exciting than his compatriots Smetana and Janáček. It seemed almost a platitude; I was surprised by the protest it aroused. Dvořák has ardent advocates in this country. This year marks the sesquicentenary of his birth, next year the centenary of his arrival in New York, to direct the National Conservatory of Music, and of the Te Deum he contributed to the Columbus celebrations. (The "New World" Symphony followed in 1893, the cantata "The American Flag" in 1895.) Last month, in New Orleans, a six-day Dvořák Sesquicentennial Festival and Conference was presented by the University of New Orleans, in collaboration with Texas A&M University: papers by day (nearly fifty of them), concerts in the evening. The New Orleans Symphony played Dvořák's Third Symphony and his Piano Concerto, with Radoslav Kvapil as the soloist, at the opening concert, and the "New World" Symphony at the closing concert. Choirs from Louisiana State University and the University of New Orleans sang the Mass in D, in St. Louis Cathedral. Cynthia Haymon gave a recital of songs by Dvořák and by Harry T. Burleigh (who while a student at the National Conservatory introduced Dvořák to the black music he so much admired). The Emerson String Quartet played the C-major Terzetto, the C-major Quartet, and (with Wu Han) the A-major Piano Quintet, Opus 81. There was piano music, more chamber music, and an evening of opera scenes, presented mainly by local performers.

Czech music seems to be much studied in this country; the Dvořák conference had been preceded by international conferences on Smetana (San Diego, 1984), Janáček (St. Louis, 1988), and Martinů (St. Louis, 1990). Dvořák scholars from six European countries, from Canada, and from across America gathered in New Orleans to present their latest thoughts and findings. I was sorry to miss sessions devoted to the impact of America on Dvořák and the impact of Dvořák on America. He believed that American "classical" music should be based on what he called "the old plantation songs." He wrote, "In the negro melodies of America I discover all that is needed for a great and noble school of music. They are pathetic, tender, passionate, melancholy, solemn, religious, bold, merry, gay or what you will. . . . There is nothing in the whole range of composition that cannot be supplied with themes from this source." But some of his findings were odd: that "the music of the Negroes and of the Indians was practically identical" and that "the music of the two races bore a remarkable similarity to the music of Scotland." At other New Orleans sessions, European influences formed an inevitable topic. Dvořák was a composer much influenced: in the Grove article on him John Clapham touches on his admiration for Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn, and Schubert, discusses "the powerful influence of Wagner," and continues, "Other composers who influenced Dvořák at different times include Berlioz, Schumann, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Liszt, Weber, Lortzing, Verdi and, above all, Brahms." Hartmut Schick, from Tübingen University, added a name by proposing Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony as a clear model for Dvořák's Eighth. The influence of Janáček upon Dvořák, not only vice versa, came up. A friend of mine insists that in a round of Dittersdorf (or Guess the Composer) when the puzzle piece suggests now Schubert, now Schumann, now Brahms but is plainly not by any of them, a guess of "Dvořák" almost always gives her the right answer. (The game is named for that fertile composer whose works can easily be mistaken, at first, for Haydn's.) Other friends insist that it needs but a bar or two to make manifest Dvořák's individual, distinctive personality.

"If that's Bo-Peep, tell her we're not here."

There was some discussion of nationalism—a topic still shadowed by reaction (as a Smetana enthusiast, I'm tempted to call it overreaction) to Zdeněk Nejedlý's denigration of Dvořák. Nejedlý was an influential musicologist and politician, a musical czar of Communist Czechoslovakia. Minister of Education and president of the Czech Academy were among the posts he held from 1945 until his death, in 1962. He declared Smetana to be the true, patriotic voice of his countrymen, with worthy followers in Fibich, Foerster, and Ostrčil; and, as Grove puts it, "his attitude to other figures in Czech music—Dvořák, Janáček, Suk and Novák—who happened not to belong to this succession was severe and often wholly destructive.”

In his final lustre, Dvořák composed three operas: “The Devil and Kate,” “Rusalka,” and “Armida.” He said, “Long years ago I proved that my main inclination was toward operatic composition.” But the world has preferred to remember him as an instrumental composer. Of his eleven operas, only “Rusalka” has been much played outside Czechoslovakia. In this country, it has been presented a dozen times (since 1935) but never for more than one or a few performances at a time, and in New York there has been no professional staging. (Of two productions I saw in 1975, at the Juilliard and in San Diego, neither had such shining merit as to persuade the Met or the City Opera to take up the lovely score, but Eve Queler’s 1987 concert performance, with Gabriela Beňačková as its heroine, should have done so.) “Alfred,” “King and Collier” (in either of its quite different settings), “The Stubborn Lovers” (once known as “The Pigheaded Peasants”), “Vanda” (some alluring excerpts were played in New Orleans), and “Armida” await American premières. “The Cunning Peasant” (a stream of engaging, unforced melody and of tenderness, warm affection, high spirits, and wit—if not of passion or tragic despair) and “The Jacobin” have been seen only in Washington, “The Devil and Kate” only in Washington and St. Louis; the epic “Dimitri” has been done only in a Carnegie concert performance. In New Orleans, Jan Smaczny talked so eloquently about “Armida” as to leave his listeners longing to hear a live performance of Dvořák’s last opera. Perhaps Miss Queler—who, with her “Kát’a Kabanová,” “Dalibor,” “Libuše,” “Rusalka,” and “Jenůfa,” has become Czech opera’s principal champion in this city—will one day give us “Armida.” (Does Montserrat Caballé still sing the title role, as in her Bremen days she did?) In New Orleans, extended episodes from “The Jacobin”—though they were but modestly done, with accompaniment from an instrumental sextet—revealed the affecting power of Dvořák’s dramatic music. He was no theatrical adept: his dramaturgy is often naïve, clumsy. But the emotions ring so true and the music is so honest and so beautiful that listeners, provided that they can follow the words, are deeply stirred. “The Jacobin” was sung, with expression, in Rodney Milnes’s English translation, which has given the opera currency in Britain.

I left New Orleans eager to hear more of the operas but still puzzled by, still unable to “place,” Dvořák: a natural musical genius; a ready assimilator; a sterling, fluent, lovable, and, at his best, lovely creator; an excellent fellow (card games, pigeon breeding, and train spotting among his recreations). I still don’t have the sharpness of response that I have to Smetana and Janáček. Tragedy was beyond his range, and that limitation seems to put him in the second drawer of natural musical geniuses—along with, say, Mendelssohn, Gounod, and Grieg. But during days of immersion in Dvořák amid his committed admirers one learned a quicker response to what they so ardently heard: the melodic beauty, the unforced energy of the modulations, the skill of the scoring. Young Elgar played violin in the orchestra when Dvořák conducted the Stabat Mater and the Sixth Symphony at the 1884 Three Choirs Festival, and to a friend he wrote, “I wish you could hear Dvořák’s music. It is simply ravishing, so tuneful & clever & the orchestration is wonderful; no matter how few instruments he uses it never sounds thin. I cannot describe it; it must be heard.”

JANÁČEK’s operas have taken a hold on the late-twentieth-century repertory in a way that Dvořák’s have not. No composer is more direct in his theatrical utterance. Janáček shared Mussorgsky’s dream of a pitch contour, a vocal gesture, that, while derived from the speech inflections of a particular language, would be universally eloquent. He came close to realizing that dream, but not so close that his operas do not suffer if they are sung untranslated to an audience not versed in Czech. “Jenůfa” and “Kát’a Kabanová” have been played quite widely through this country. In New York, the City Opera has staged and revived “The Makropulos Affair” and “The Cunning Little Vixen,” and last season it did “From the House of the Dead,” all in English. The Met has had less

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success with Janáček; it tackled “Jenůfa” in 1924 (in German, with Jeritza as the heroine) and again in 1974 (in English, with Teresa Kubiak), but the first production was never revived, and eleven years passed before the second was seen again. Now the company has mounted, in Czech, “Kát’a Kabanová.” The production was carefully considered and carefully cast.

“Kát’a Kabanová,” based on Ostrovsky’s 1859 play “The Storm,” is the tragedy of a romantic, impulsive young woman married to a dull, unworthy husband, Tichon, who is ruled by his tyrannical, narrow-minded mother, the formidable Marfa Kabanová, known as Kabanicha. The setting is a small town beside the Volga. Kát’a falls in love with Boris, a young man from the big city, and he with her; orphaned, he has left Moscow and come to live with his narrow-minded, cantankerous uncle, Dikoj, who controls his inheritance. (Ostrovsky’s play carries the note “All the characters except Boris are dressed in the Russian fashion.”) Kát’a tries to repress her feelings, to be a faithful wife. Tichon leaves town for ten days. The lighthearted Varvara, a foster child in the Kabanov house (in the play, Kát’a’s sister-in-law), who is having an affair with the lighthearted Váňa, Dikoj’s clerk, persuades Kát’a to steal out at night and meet Boris. Act II ends with a shy, awkward love scene that flowers into passion; the exchanges between Kát’a and Boris are contrasted with the playful banter of Varvara and Váňa. In Act III, Tichon has returned. Kát’a is racked by guilt. In the arcade of a ruined building, beside the Volga, that is decked with representations of sinners being cast into Hell, people shelter from a storm. Amid thunderclaps, Kát’a blurts out before them, confesses to her husband and mother-in-law, that she spent every night with Boris while Tichon was away. In a final scene, beside the river, Váňa and Varvara resolve to escape, to Moscow. Kát’a wanders on, distraught. Boris joins her, and they say farewell; his uncle is sending him to Siberia. Kát’a seems to hear the voices of the river calling to her, and throws herself into it.

Ostrovsky’s play has been variously interpreted. Janáček concentrates on the plight of a heroine trapped in a harsh, loveless, merchant society. Long, lyrical, almost stream-of-consciousness monologues—the “arias”—are assigned to her. In the first of them, she dreams of being a bird, recalls her carefree childhood and also trancelike visions of heavenly splendor which she had in church. In the last, her thoughts stray between wretchedness, loneliness, guilt, and passion. The other characters are created, for the most part, by small, telling strokes; personalities are made vivid by the cut of a phrase or two. In Janáček’s treatment of Kabanicha and of Dikoj, there is almost a touch of caricature. The orchestra is alive, active, communicative in every motif, every color. “Kát’a Kabanová” is a short, intense opera.

It can be staged in realistic settings or in “atmospheric,” “psychological,” non-naturalistic settings, and both have proved successful—the former provided that the scenes are also charged with some atmosphere. The opera begins with an evocation of the great river; its strong, indifferent flow (to which differing symbolic significances have been attached) seems to dominate the action. Janáček wanted no mid-act pauses between the scenes; six years after the première, he extended the between-scenes interludes, to make such continuity easier. He was pleased by a 1928 Prague production at which Acts I and II were done without an intermission, and urged other theatres to follow suit. The Met achieved this continuity (at the cost, on the first night, of some rumbling and thumps from the stage). The designs are by Robert Israel. Acts I and II play on a broad, deep wooden stage with one or two toy-town buildings at the back; the Kabanov house is represented by a life-size one-room dwelling, realistic so far as it goes, which is placed sidestage in the first and fourth scenes and sits midstage for the interiors. Everything looked more or less beige-colored. For Act III, which is executed in black and white, there is a different central edifice, the ruined building, and then a near-bare stage. This décor did not seem to me altogether well devised. Unlike, say, the Met décor for “Lulu,” it did little to mitigate the chilling vastness of the place and project the intimate drama out into the house. And it lacked atmosphere: there was no sense of the great river; there was no warm summer-night romance in the "ravine overgrown with bushes" to which Kát'a escapes for her tryst. (In fact, there were no bushes, no ravine; the lovers met in the back yard of the house.) The absence of colors bleached the drama and produced a somewhat arty effect. The isolated one-room abode meant that exits and entrances were made across the street—as if the Kabanov family slept elsewhere, in *dépendances*.

The heroine, as in Miss Queler's concert performance twelve years ago, was Miss Beňačková. She is not an impetuous actress, and she appeared a shade matronly for the role, but she sang it with subtlety and understanding, and her tone can still be radiant. Leonie Rysanek was a surprisingly unformidable Kabanicha; unaccountably, she seemed to have lost power of presence. Wieslaw Ochman played Boris with veteran confidence but did not cut an urban, romantic figure. Susan Quittmeyer was a big Varvara, Peter Straka a lively little Váňa. Aage Haugland was an excellent Dikoj, Allan Glassman an adequate Tichon. Jonathan Miller's production, like much of his recent operatic work, seemed rather weak and pallid. He went against the book from time to time, but not in any rewarding way. (Kát'a made a stagy, prima-donna solo entrance, not as one of a family party returning from church.) Charles Mackerras conducted. A master of Janáček's music, he secured loving, expressive, character-filled playing of superlative quality. I first heard "Kát'a Kabanová" under his baton, forty years ago. Since then, he has refined his reading; he has edited the score; he has restored the musical text to the particularity of what Janáček originally wrote but other hands altered. His recordings of "Jenůfa," "Osud," "Kát'a," "The Cunning Little Vixen," "Makropulos," and "From the House of the Dead" are famous. His sustained championship has done much to instate the composer in the contemporary repertory. I was amazed to read, in advance, that a colleague considered Sir Charles's Janáček conducting "bland." At the Met performance, I wondered for a moment whether he was quite as excitable, as fiery, as he used to be, but I thought him even more perceptive and eloquent. —ANDREW PORTER

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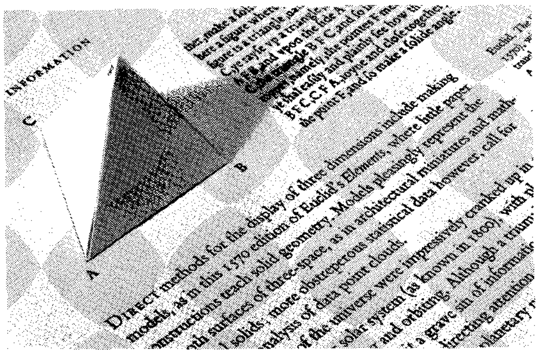

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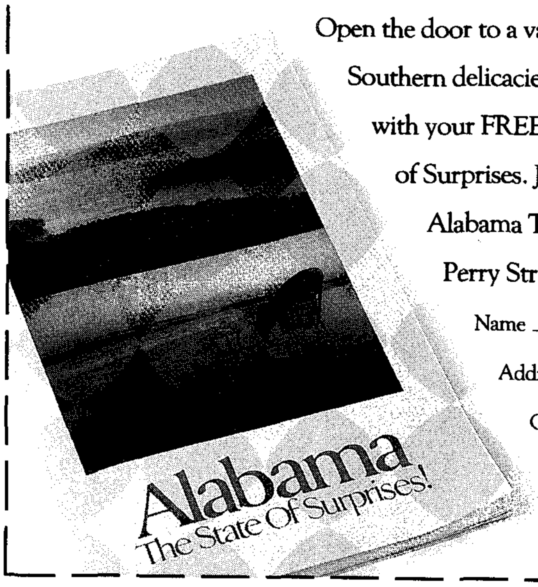

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BOOKS

Farfetched

NOVELS are not just news; we ask some stretch of imagination, some attempt to extend the author's witness into human possibilities beyond the edge of his or her experience. Three recently published novels—by an Italian, a Japanese, and an American born in the Philippines—all show a brave reach, geographic and otherwise.

"Yucatán," by Andrea De Carlo (translated from the Italian by William Weaver; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $21.95), has as narrator a young Englishman, Dave Hollis; as central figure an internationally revered Yugoslav film director, Dru Resnik; and as setting Southern California and some way-out spaces in Mexico. Resnik and Dave fly from London to Los Angeles to meet Jack Nesbitt, a thick-necked millionaire who has lined up a meeting with Astor Camado, a never photographed but best-selling author whose four books "tell the same story from four different points of view." In this story, "a young New York musicologist of South American extraction goes to Mexico to do some research and meets this Indian witch doctor, who little by little draws him into a vortex of magic practices, until he's brought into contact with a world beyond, or a parallel world, if you like." Nesbitt wants to produce a movie by Resnik based upon these books, and the author himself appears and speaks amiably of the world beyond ("A completely empty, dark room. . . . There's nothing to recognize, nothing happens. There is only this absolute blackness") and the secret of life ("The secret is knowing that absolutely *everything* is insignificant: love and activity and relationships and feelings, landscapes, desires, plans, et cetera. They're nothing but bric-a-brac, little pieces of kitsch scattered around. The secret is *not to be there.* You understand what I mean?"). He hands Resnik his "stick of power" and disappears from the novel.

Advisers from the other, or parallel, world, however, take over, sending messages by pencilled note "written in a shaky and sprawling hand," messages like "*Attention, wrongly directed, is dangerous, because it rebounds. We are watching you.*" The world is just one big fortune cookie to these mysterious others. They telephone, too, in voices that are "almost electronic, but not exactly," with "some kind of expression, underneath," and function as travel agents, sending our trio of moviemakers, and the female companions they effortlessly accumulate, to specified parts of Mexico and back. The characters are not very real, and their actions seem inconsistent and implausible, but perhaps that is the point. We are somehow inside a movie being made, proceeding by jump cuts and changed camera angles, in an atmosphere of agitated stasis. Dave and the woman, Elaine, designated by the voices as "the spiritual girl" get into bed together, in a steamy Mexican motel, but can't quite make love, because, explains Elaine, "tomorrow we have to receive enlightenment in the positive place." Dave narrates:

> It's a kind of ridiculous, confused torture; it's not doing us much good. We move in fits, sweating, our legs incredibly nervous, tangled in the sheets of the two sagging beds, and it's clear that whoever the voice is and whatever he wants, we're involved in a game conducted by others, and there's no way we can get out of it on our own.

Frustrating as it is, this scene is one of the more comprehensible ones, and relatively loaded with feeling, or at least with itching.

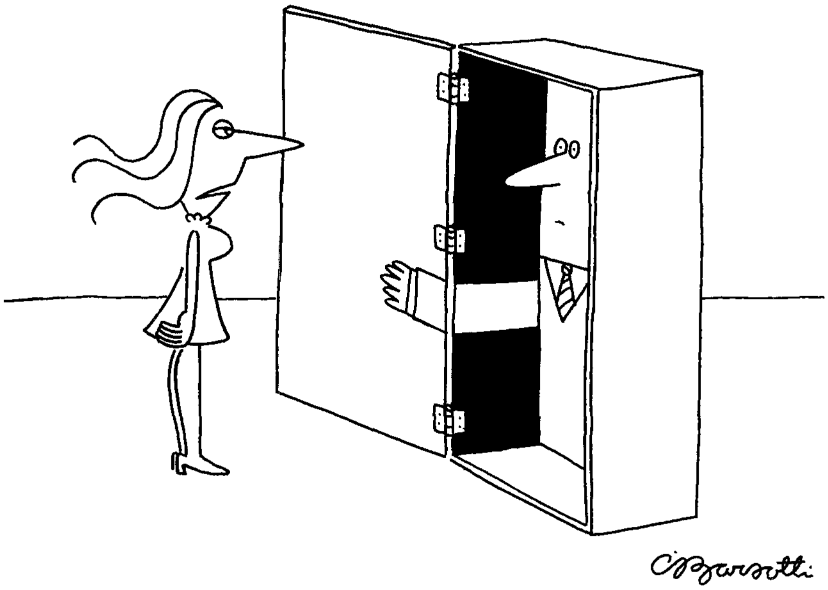
Everything happens as if to tourists who can't shake their jet lag. People keep being speechless, and ordering food in restaurants without eating it. Dave is jealous of and irritated by Resnik, with his off-again, on-again charm, his habit of directorial manipulation, his "spoiled superstar" airs. Nesbitt tags along in this increasingly weird project, frequently exasperated but never tired of shelling out money for hotels, plane fares, and, in the end, a battery of expensive musical instruments. The women, like many women in movies, are good-looking but toylike—magnetized toys, drawn to Resnik, whom even waitresses sense to be a starmaker. The dialogue at times seems straight from a B movie, as do the tropical scenery and the feeble strain of science fiction. Our narrator keeps noting filmic effects, like synchronization and discontinuity: "As if synchronized, we get up"; "The preparation of the flambé seems to go in jerks, like a film sequence from which frames have been snipped at random." A wannabe director, Dave stands outside his own actions: "My head is incredibly confused, with overlapping images of three or four possible reactions. I see myself detached, allowing her to leave; dragging her back inside; going out and facing Nesbitt. None of these possibilities is a complete sequence." Caressing Elaine in a romantic tropical shower, he reflects wonderingly "that of all the situations that have ever happened to me in my life, this is the closest to a film." Elsewhere, he mentally scolds her for not staying in character: "It's incredible how little she cares about maintaining any coherence of character; even with respect only to last night, or this morning."

But Dave and his creator are less into character than into atmosphere, and as an atmospheric seismograph the novel registers some very delicate jiggles: "The abandoned film is in the air: a kind of vibration just below or just above the muffled sounds of the lobby." The great Resnik, to whose thoughts we are privy by way of italics, broods, "*The atmosphere is disjointed, not fluid, as I had imagined; neither attraction nor isolation is sufficiently strong to prevail over the other.*" Waxing spookier, he lectures his entourage, "People don't realize how dangerous negative landscapes can be. If you cross them without any kind of shielding, on a motorcycle, for example, they can even destroy you. I'm sure there are people who are dissolved, never found again." And when the group visits, at the behest of the voices from beyond, the monumental Yucatán ruins at Tis Talan and Atsantil, the negative and positive vibes are exhaustively plumbed. At Atsantil:

> The equilibrium of the stones seems temporary, as if in the course of the night

> someone could come and pull a couple of buildings closer together, or move them apart, or even dismantle them to use their material differently. At the same time, the whole is curiously strong, not having to overcome great pressures or resistance. . . . The tourists are not made insignificant by the imposing ferocity of buildings or by the enormity of empty space, as at Tis Talan; the movements and sounds here are absorbed by the landscape, purified without the knowledge of those who produce them. It doesn't even seem to be hot anymore, though the sun is at its peak and the light is extraordinarily intense.

There is beauty in such a laid-back, entranced evocation of atmospheric nuance, and there is a curious authenticity in Mr. De Carlo's washed-out, flimsy, heartless little movie of a novel. This is how the world seems as the millennium evaporates: a series of hotel rooms and tourist sights at which we arrive numbed by the journey. If there is a woman in the hotel room, she blends right in, like the objects in Elaine's friend Rickie's slide show, "photographed as if their use or normal meaning were unknown." We have lost touch with the *why* of things, and what is left is fast food for the senses and the humming brain. Mr. De Carlo's native Italy is perhaps still too saturated with traditional meanings—too full of inhabited historical allusions—so he had to come to the New World, the empty opulence of Southern California and Mexico's death-haunted poverty, for the atmosphere he needed, the flickering bleached shimmer of not-being-there-ness.


"I'm sorry, Wilson, but I liked you better before your therapy."

KUNIO TSUJI, the author of "The Signore: Shogun of the Warring States" (translated from the Japanese by Stephen Snyder; Kodansha International; $17.95), has travelled far geographically—he studied in Paris for four years—and imaginatively, setting this, his first novel to be translated into English, in the sixteenth century and in the mind and voice of a European. The narrative is framed as a long epistle from a nameless Italian soldier of fortune who finds himself for a few years an intimate of the Portuguese missionaries in Japan and of a warlord whom he calls the Signore but whom the Japanese reader, the translator assures us in a preface, would recognize as Oda Nobunaga (1534-82). Nobunaga was a chieftain of the small province of Owari, who managed, by dint of his cleverness and ferocity, to subdue twenty of the provinces around the beleaguered imperial capital of Kyoto and thus to take the first and crucial step in the unification of Japan after two centuries of chaotic civil war. A kind of George Washington, we might say, who had to conquer and massacre rival forces in the states around Virginia, all in the nominal service of a powerless central government. Nobunaga is not named in Mr. Tsuji's novel, but his successors in the unifying process, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu, are. The only fictional character is the narrator, who, we are concisely informed, murdered his wife and her lover in an alley in Genoa, fled to Lisbon, worked as a porter and lived as a vagrant, enlisted in an expedition to the New World, served as an officer under cruel conditions, joined a Spanish fleet sailing for the Molucca Islands, and spent ten years at sea. He landed in Japan in 1570, at a village where there existed a small Christian church and several Japanese friars. "My first impression of the Japanese," he writes his Italian confidant, "was of a fair-skinned, courteous people who smiled readily and were extremely clean in their persons. Nor later did I have much cause to revise this opinion, except insofar as the courtesy and affability of the Japanese is not infrequently tempered with a kind of contempt or condescension, a combination not generally seen among the peoples of Europe."

Mr. Tsuji, to judge by this stately and lucid translation, maintains his cultural contortion gracefully, viewing the Japanese and their military tumult through the eyes of a renegade Latin. The narrator's voice seems sometimes prim and pedantic for such a ruffian, but then the author has set himself a basically philosophical problem: the humanization of Nobunaga, who was considered brutal and vindictive by even the lenient standards of feudal Japan. George Sansom, in his "History of Japan 1334-1615," after patiently trying to balance the accounts on this pivotal historical figure, concludes, "He was a cruel and callous brute." In 1571, Nobunaga's forces stormed and utterly razed the Buddhist stronghold of Mt. Hiei, a fortified complex of temples and shrines of incomparable artistic value; in the words of a contemporary writer, "the whole mountainside was a great slaughterhouse, and the sight was one of unbearable horror." At the siege of Nagashima, in 1574, he exterminated the inhabitants of five fortresses, despite repeated offers of surrender. Upon the conquest of Echizen, in 1575, Nobunaga dispatched a letter to Kyoto boasting that the streets were so crammed with corpses there was no room for more. The remaining fugitives, he wrote, must be searched out and slain "*yama yama, tani tani*"—"on every hill, in every valley." In his last campaign, against the family of his old enemy Takeda Shingen, he wiped out all the Takeda kin and roasted alive the monks of the temple unfortunate enough to have sheltered Shingen's remains.

The narrator of "The Signore" witnesses some of this horrendous carnage, and reports on the slaughter of the captured servants and children of a general who has defected from Nobunaga's service, on the burning alive of ten thousand trapped inhabitants of a fortress, on the severed hands of drowned enemies that still cling "stiff and pale as if carved from stone" to the rails of Nobunaga's fleet. Why does the Signore, with his pallid calm, his high-pitched voice, and his nervously twitching brow, persist in such butchery? Out of perfectionism and rationality, the narrator decides: "Among all the Japanese people I met during my stay in that land, I never knew one who believed as strongly as he that the greatest good was that all things should come about necessarily and reasonably." He extolls the Signore as "a man who possessed a will to seek the limits of perfection in the work he had chosen for himself." With his own murders in his mind, the narrator goes on, "And it was in precisely this kind of will . . . that I myself found the only meaning of our life here on this earth." So austere a conclusion, perhaps, belongs more to a twentieth-century Japanese than to an Italian of the time of the Counter-Reformation; Kunio Tsuji, a Japanese with memories of modern war and Japan's subsequent indoctrination in the virtues of peace, worries at the riddle of martial morality, giving it a religious tinge when he has the Signore think, "I was unwilling to mar the hallowed rites of battle with acts of kindness. . . . The only mercy in battle is to be merciless!" After the slaughter at Ishiyama, the Signore dismisses one of his own generals, "the scholarly Lord Sakuma," for his "humanity and restraint in the final phase of the battle." The novel quotes the edict, presumably authentic:

> The way of the warrior is not that of others. In a battle . . . it is incumbent on the commanders—for their sake and for mine—to choose the most opportune moment, then attack with all they have. In this manner, the troops are spared prolonged hardship and struggle. It is the only rational course. But you, with your persistent reluctance and hesitation, have followed a course that can only be judged as thoughtless and unmanly.

Mercilessness, then, is the swiftest route to merciful peace. The reader, and presumably the author, can hardly not think of the two atomic bombs that in a few blinding moments killed more Japanese than Nobunaga's thirty years of systematic mayhem, but did open the way to recovery. As the Signore hacks his way through his enemies, peace prettily descends upon Kyoto:

> Relief and happiness could be sensed in every quarter of the city. Ruined houses had been repaired, new ones were under construction, and the lively sound of hammering filled the air. Under the Signore's tutelage, a police force had been installed, and the watch in each street had been strengthened so that the work of burglars, vandals, and other mischief makers had become unprofitable. Merchants had returned to the boulevards in great numbers, and little theatres and tent shows were again attracting an audience. The women of the pleasure quarters came back from the provinces and could be seen in their bright *quimonos*, beckoning to customers.

On the mountainside of Azuchi the victorious shogun builds his own castle, roofed in blue tile, and magnanimously decrees that the same roofing material be used for the splendid Christian church to be constructed near the castle walls.

Assuming a Westerner's point of view, the Japanese novelist identifies with the fate of the precarious but thriving Portuguese Jesuit mission in sixteenth-century Japan, portraying the priestly leaders—Francisco Cabral, Luis Frois, Organtino Gnecchi-Soldi, Alessandro Valignano—and animating with particular warmth another historical Christian, the Japanese Brother Lorenzo, a virtually blind and lame convert who acted as translator and go-between for the missionaries. Nobunaga and his allied daimyos extended to the Jesuits a degree of protection and friendship they would never again enjoy from the rulers of Japan. The reasons are not so paradoxical. The Japanese samurai admired in the Jesuit missionaries an austerity and discipline equivalent to their own. The Portuguese brought with them Europe's trade and advanced technology, of which the military technology was especially valued—our Italian narrator's intimacy with the Signore is based upon his expertise in arquebus manufacture and deployment, and in naval design and armor. The infant Christian community, which had close to three hundred thousand converts by 1600, at first posed no threat to the established social order, whereas the Buddhist monks and clergy, spearheaded by the militant Hokke sect, were among Nobunaga's chief enemies. Further, as the novel tells it, the Jesuits fed the Signore's thirst for rational knowledge and intellectual companionship, while the Buddhists were a force for obscurantism and stagnation. The alleged companionship is a bit of a stretch to imagine, and even the mediating device of the soul-searching Italian soldier does not quite make the Signore sympathetic. The sorrow on his "pale, sad visage" is repeatedly mentioned, yet we never feel sorry for him, or believe in him as a kind of Nietzschean superman, a martyr to "the loneliness that came of a determination to test the limits of human existence." For all the historical blood and struggle it contains, "The Signore" makes a papery effect not much different from that of "Yucatán"—fiction at one remove, the characters dimmed by the intervening medium.

AS far as news—human activity given the immediacy of personal witness—goes, "Dogeaters," by Jessica Hagedorn (Pantheon; $19.95), is the richest of our three exotic novels. The Philippines, to be sure, are not exotic to those who live there, and have been no strangers to our newspapers, from the islands' pious acquisition by McKinley, through their Japanese occupation and American reconquest in the Second World War, to the latest headlines concerning disastrous earthquakes, the perils of Corazon Aquino, and the trials of Imelda Marcos. "Dogeaters" begins in 1956 and ends with the unnamed Marcoses still uneasily in power. Ms. Hagedorn was born and raised in the Philippines, but has led a vivacious artistic life in the United States, as—the book jacket tells us—"performance artist, poet, and playwright." The jacket elaborates: "For many years the leader and lyricist for the Gangster Choir band, she is presently a commentator on *Crossroads*, a syndicated weekly newsmagazine on public radio." A member of Mr. De Carlo's generation, she is thoroughly imbued with postwar popular culture, and her characters perceive the world through a scrim of movie memories and radio soap operas and try to act in tune with song lyrics and poignant cinematic poses. In the multicultural welter of impoverished Manila, however, the poses don't always fit, and the movies, arriving some years late, don't always make sense. Our young heroine and part-time narrator, Rio Gonzaga, and her bosom (and bosomy) friend and cousin Pucha Gonzaga are sometimes puzzled by the American movies of the nineteen-fifties: Jane Wyman seems to them too old for Rock Hudson in "All That Heaven Allows" (it should have been Kim Novak), and they are bewildered and bored by "A Place in the Sun" (it was "probably too American for us"). Yet some images hit home:

> The back of Montgomery Clift's shoulder in giant close-up on the movie screen. Elizabeth Taylor's breathtaking face is turned up toward him, imploring a forbidden kiss. They are drunk with their own beauty and love, that much I understand. Only half of Elizabeth Taylor's face is visible—one violet eye, one arched black eyebrow framed by her short, glossy black hair. She is glowing, on fire in soft focus.

A world on quiet fire is arrestingly conveyed by Ms. Hagedorn's episodic, imagistic collage of a novel. A borrowed American culture has given Filipinos dreams but not the means to make dreams come true. As in the novels of the Argentine Manuel Puig, we are reminded how ravishingly Hollywood cinema invaded the young minds of the Third World, where one did not meet the corrective reality of North America upon emerging from the theatre. The popular culture in "Dogeaters" is consumed, like the constantly described food, with a terrible honest hunger.

Rio Gonzaga's family is upper middle class and, with its country club and muffled adultery and anxious rumors from the society's power structure, feels like many well-off households portrayed in the fiction of young Americans and Europeans. Filipinos, however, seem to take their roles rather theatrically: Rio's beautiful mother, who tints "her black hair with auburn highlights, just like Rita Hayworth," lives in mauve rooms with all the windows boarded up and painted over, the air-conditioner running twenty-four hours a day. *Her* mother, Lola Narcisa, is a small brown woman from Davao, in the south, who eats with her hands, walks with a stoop, has a childish giggle, and fills her room with the "sweet gunpowder smell and toxic smoke of Elephant brand *katol*, a coil-shaped mosquito-repellent incense." Rio's paternal grandmother, Abuelita Socorro, is a thick-waisted widow who lives in Spain with her effete son, wears a scrap of the Shroud of Turin pinned to her brassiere, prays before and after eating, and owns a miraculous rosary that glows in the dark. Rio's maternal grandfather is an American, slowly dying in the shabby American Hospital, whose "melancholy American doctors" are, like him, "leftovers from recent wars, voluntary exiles whose fair skin is tinged a blotchy red from the tropical sun or too much alcohol; like his, their clothes and skin reek of rum and Lucky Strikes." He and the family friends the Goldenbergs are among the few non-movie Americans we meet; Americans are not villains in this novel, though the Philippine atmosphere is villainous, and the government moves through film-noir shadows. Among the Gonzagas' network of upper-echelon friends is the charming Nicky, General Nicasio Ledesma, who turns out to be a conscientious torturer and to have as his mistress a drug-addicted actress, Lolita Luna, adored by millions but unable to realize her dream of emigrating to the United States, where she "can study acting and stop playing so much." The interconnections in Manila society ramify as the novel ranges from the First Lady's dreams to the squalid world of "shower dancers"—young men who lather up and get it up for the delectation of a homosexual night-club audience.

"Dogeaters" has a teeming cast of characters, and their multiplicity somewhat dissipates the reader's involvement. The book, prefaced by excessive thanks for help in its composition, feels a bit boiled down, as though its scattered high-energy moments were edited from a more leisurely-paced panoramic work. The Avila family, representing Manila's liberal aristocracy, especially seems skimped, though Senator Avila's assassination is the book's political climax, bringing a number of threads together, and his daughter Daisy's triumph in a beauty contest is its most magic-realist moment. "Our country belongs to women who easily shed tears and men who are ashamed to weep," the chapter called "Epiphany" begins. "During the days following her extravagant coronation, something peculiar happens to Daisy Avila. . . . Each morning, as Daisy struggles to wake from her sleep, she

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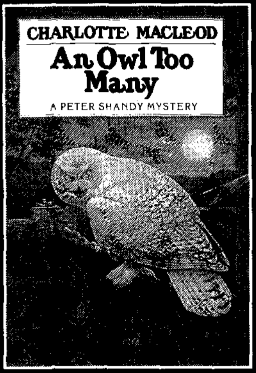

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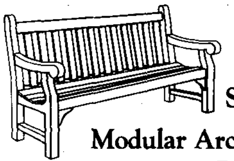

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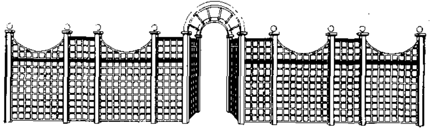

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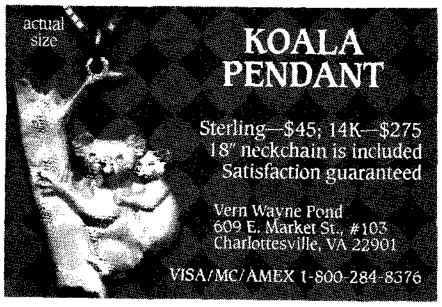

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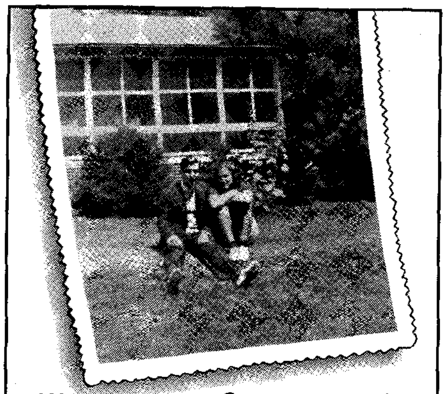

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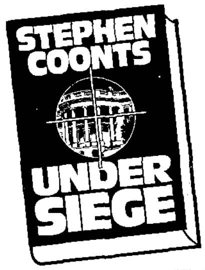

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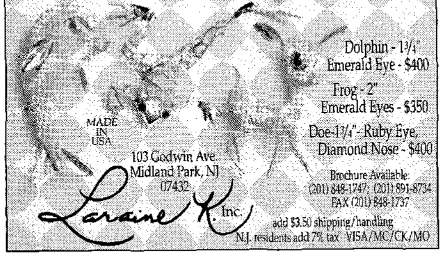

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finds herself whimpering softly. Her eyes are continually bloodshot and swollen. The once radiant beauty cannot pinpoint the source of her mysterious and sudden unhappiness." As the press and the beauty-contest sponsors clamor at the Avilas' door, she finally wakes with dry eyes and agrees to be interviewed on television. In the course of the interview she "accuses the First Lady of furthering the cause of female delusions in the Philippines." From this scandalous indiscretion it is a short step for her to marry a publicity-conscious English playboy who sees her on television. In short order, she separates from him, takes a rebel lover, and is captured by the government, interrogated, raped, and released; she smuggles herself back into the rebel terrain and is reborn as the heroic, dedicated Aurora. But her transformation takes place mostly offstage, glimpsed through a series of news items, and her comical, uncaused fit of weeping remains the image we treasure, a distillation of this sad land of beauty contests.

Ms. Hagedorn allows herself more space in the underworld of young male hustlers, and in her impersonation of the novel's other narrator, the night-club d.j., homosexual prostitute, and cocaine addict Joey. Piercingly she brings off his jaunty voice of cheerful bravado and wounded scorn. Joey's father was a black American soldier, his mother a beautiful whore who drowned herself when he was small. He was adopted by, or had already been sold to, a petty crook called Uncle, who trained him as a pickpocket and arranged his sexual initiation at the age of ten. "I've had my share of women since, but they don't really interest me. Don't ask me why. To tell you the truth, not much interests me at all. I learned early that men go for me; I like that about them. I don't have to work at being sexy." During a week-long tryst with a German film director brought to Manila by one of the First Lady's ambitious art-film festivals, Joey's interior monologue is a running illumination of how sexual traders scheme, fantasize, and suffer flares of desire and pity. Looking at the German, he thinks:

> He's around forty, who knows. Pale and flabby, baggy clothes, a drooping moustache and the smell of cigarettes, straggling reddish-blond hair. I'm not sure I can bear to see him naked. It's one thing if he was just an old man. I'd expect to see his flesh hang loose like an elephant; I'd be prepared. . . . The old man with elephant skin drools. Maybe he's God the Father, lost in paradise. He can't get over how perfect I am; he can't get over the perfection of his own creation. He falls in love with me. They always do. I'll admit, I can get off with some old man that way. I need my own movies, with their flexible endings. Otherwise, it's just shit. Most sex is charity, on my part.

In the end, he steals his lover's drugs and money, having already stoked up on a big breakfast: "Scrambled eggs over garlic-fried rice, side of *longaniza* sausages and beef *tapa*, *kalamansi* juice, and fresh pineapple for dessert. My last good meal for the next few days. . . . The German is amused."

Food and romantic fantasies crowd these famished pages. Everybody wants to be loved, especially the torturing general. With little overt editorializing, Ms. Hagedorn sketches a nation that has never had much to be proud of, where even the natives feel like strangers. "Two generations, three generations, it really doesn't matter," Rio's father says. "What matters is I feel like a visitor." A humiliating poverty undermines the First Lady's dreams of cosmopolitan elegance. She dreams she is in the lobby of the Waldorf-Astoria, having just chatted with Cristina Ford: "The third elevator's door slides open without hesitation she steps in she holds up her long *terno* skirt to keep her precious beads from dragging on the floor she looks down at her bare feet the red polish on her toenails is chipped the skin between her toes is cracked and blistered streaked with dirt she is horrified." Though the narrator at the end flies off into a flurry of artiness, including a prayer to the Virgin and a letter from Pucha to Rio Gonzaga as the author of "Dogeaters," Ms. Hagedorn's novel is dense with hard-earned observation. Worried upper-class family life, seamy and hypnotic night life, suffocating and sinister and impotent political life—it is all here, set down with poetic brightness and grisly comedy. The author sees her native land from both near and far, with ambivalent love, the only kind of love worth writing about.

—JOHN UPDIKE

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A THOUGHT FOR THIS WEEK

[*From the Phoenix* (*Ariz.*) *Arizona Republic*]

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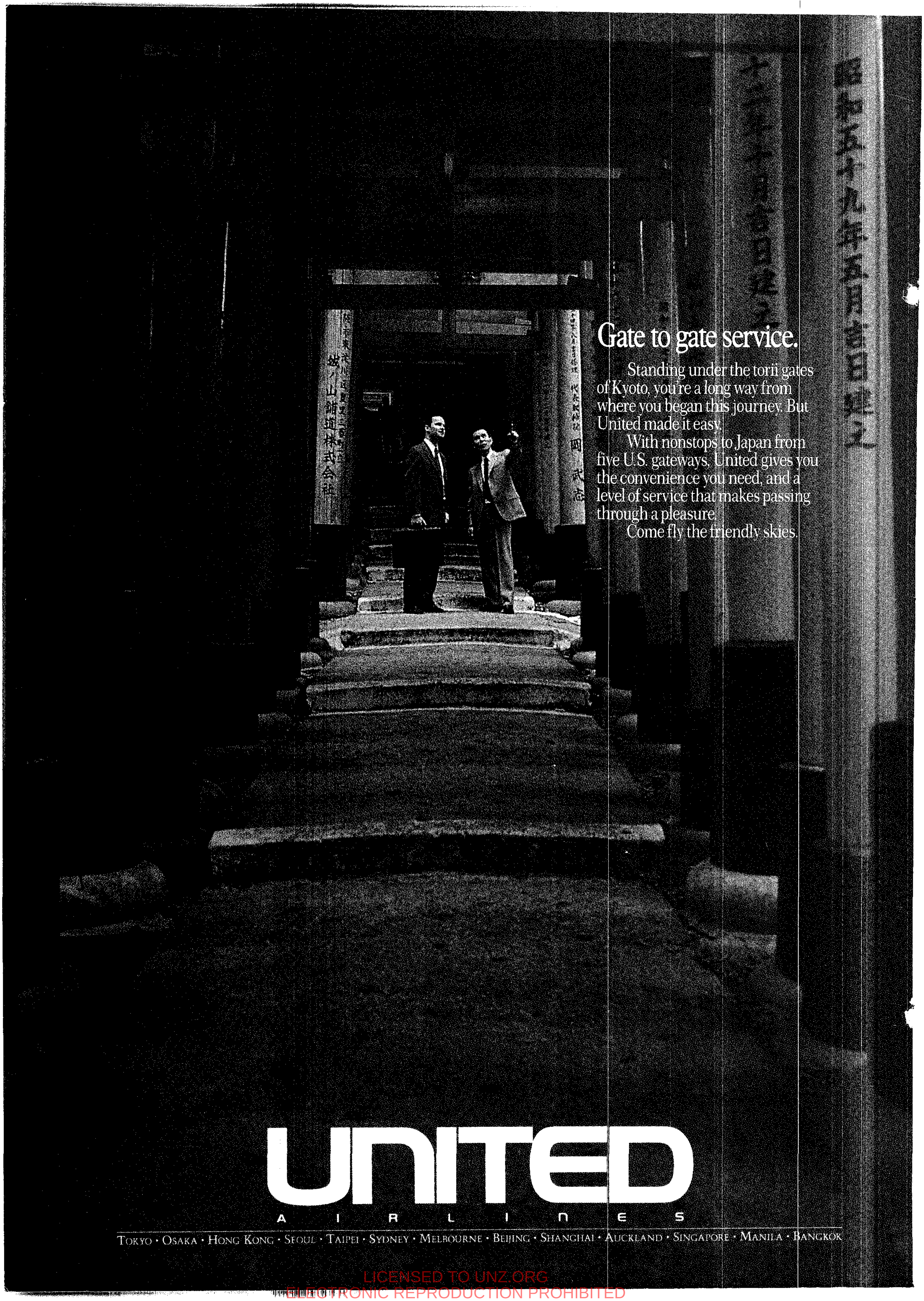
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